



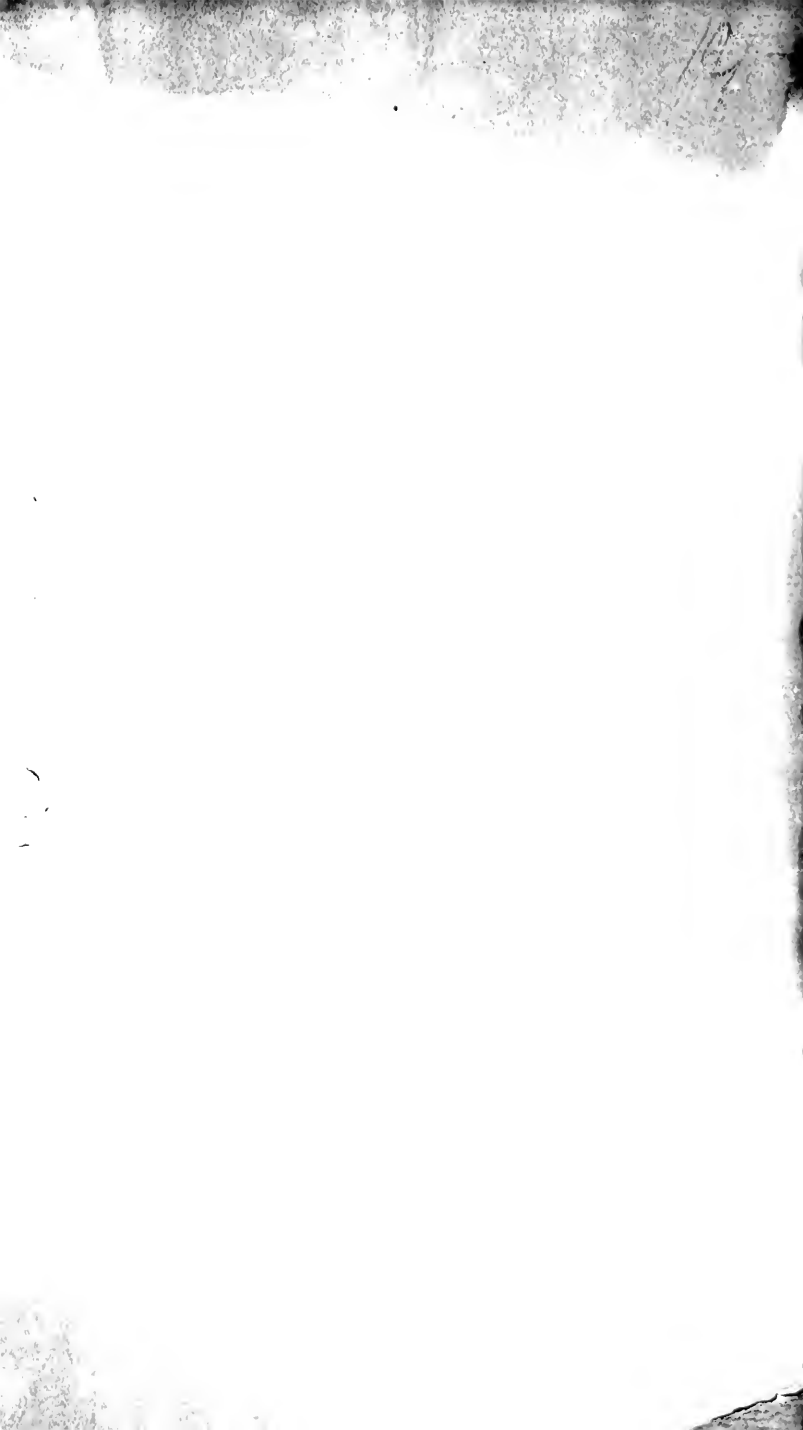
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PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BY

Mrs. Alexander Proudfit.





CALVINISM IMPROVED;
OR,
THE GOSPEL ILLUSTRATED
AS A SYSTEM
OF REAL GRACE,
ISSUING IN THE
SALVATION
OF
ALL MEN.

A Posthumous Work of the late Reverend
JOSEPH HUNTINGTON, D. D.
Minister of the First Church in Coventry, (Connecticut.)

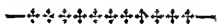
“WHO WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, AND TO COME UNTO
THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH. FOR THERE IS ONE GOD, AND
ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN, THE MAN CHRIST JE-
SUS, WHO GAVE HIMSELF A RANSOM FOR ALL, TO BE
TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME.” APOSTLE PAUL.

PRINTED AT NEW-LONDON, (CONNECTICUT.)
BY SAMUEL GREEN.

—♦♦♦♦—
M, DCC, XCVI.

Entered as the act directs.

INTRODUCTION.



THE AUTHOR, TO ALL HIS FELLOW-SINNERS,
PARTAKERS IN COMMON WITH HIM
IN GUILT AND WOE.

OUR great and common Parent hath been pleased to give us a place among his rational, and immortal creatures, and made us capable of great and everlasting happiness or misery. Which of these shall be our lot to all eternity, depends on his good, holy, and sovereign will alone. Not many of us are ordinarily much attentive to either, except in regard to the present life and world; yet were we wise, our main concern and attention would be conversant with our interest in a future state, and we should make the present life wholly subservient to that interest.

But however inattentive most are to these things, there are in the world, and always have been, many individuals scattered here and there,

whose minds have been deeply impressed with a sense of eternal things. They of this description and no other, will pay much attention to what I here offer.

The author has often been too precipitate and hasty in many things; but in no wise so in embracing the doctrine here advanced. He is now passing the meridian of life; and this opinion of the way of salvation is the result of his most careful enquiry from the days of his early youth.

His first idea of the way of salvation, was this, viz. That by the grace of God, and by a diligent use of means, he must obtain some *valuable distinction* between himself and other sinners. That when God saw *this*, his heart would be moved thereby, to give him regenerating and converting grace, and then would be holden thereby in a way of *more grace*, by gospel constitution, to confer eternal salvation.

Upon this plan he labored much in early life, but the result was not as he expected; it ended in total despair. For, the more he labored for a good hope in this way, the more he was convinced of his awful destitution of all such distinctions and qualifications. He was then led to take refuge, and found great relief in that grace, which he saw to be absolutely sovereign, flowing out of the very nature of God, through Christ; not moved by any distinctions or previous qualifications in sinners; but from

the nature of God, wholly self-moved, according to the free electing love of God. A view of which might bring a joyful sense of salvation to the most vicious, stupid, hardened sinner, as well as to himself. Yet still he had no idea of any salvation beyond the more common, and *much limited* idea of God's election and salvation.

Being much disposed to a studious life, and always delighting greatly in books, he spent much of his time in reading and enquiry, in the early periods of life. Amidst all the vanities and follies of youth, yet acquainting his heart with wisdom, even while he too much laid hold on folly. Being also much favored, by a kind Providence, with regard to the best means of instruction, and a pious example from his parents in his early days, and afterwards with a more public education; the disposition of his heart inclined him, in great preference to all other employments, to the study of divinity, and to become a preacher of the gospel.

He was now in those principles which we call *Calvinistic*; and met with some acceptance in his public performances, and soon took the pastoral charge of a kind and respectable people, from whom he has ever since received as many kindnesses as most of his brethren in the ministry have. Living in a series of harmony and love, excepting only with respect to a very few individuals, at one time and another, who yet have given him no great trouble.

He, for several years, understood the way of salvation taught in the word of God, (which he always regarded as the only decisive rule of faith and life,) agreeably, in all essential matters, to the explanations of Mr. *Calvin*, Dr. *Owen*, Mr. *Willard*, President *Forwards*, and the great body of puritan divines since the reformation from popery. Not as yet thinking of any extent of the divine decrees, or God's eternal purposes of love to a lost world, beyond the common orthodoxy of his country; or what, for want of a more significant word, he would call *the limitarian plan*. By degrees, he began to be pressed more and more in his own mind, with regard to the full consistency of it.

He preached, as did other divines, the atonement of Christ, a full and complete sacrifice for the redemption of every sinner in the world; and the divine law wholly satisfied in the obedience of Christ unto death; that every sinner on earth, was alike invited, and most solemnly commanded to believe on Christ to the saving of his soul; that it was the greatest of all sin and rebellion against God, not to believe unto salvation, and alike so, in every sinner that heard the gospel; and, that saving faith did not *create*, or in the least *change* the object or foundation of it, but was wholly grounded on an object and foundation forever immutable.

These doctrines he urged, from the nature and attributes of God; the covenant of redemption; and the dying love of Christ, as displayed

in the book of divine revelation. And, on the same principles, always enforced holiness and virtue, as a native and genuine consequence of a cordial belief of them; and also as being most reasonable and happifying in the very nature of things. Meanwhile often denouncing the dreadful wrath of God, revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men. His preaching was of this tenor, with all the uses of it, and inferences that might be drawn from it; on the idea of a *limited* decree, and a *limited* scheme of redemption and salvation.

The author holds all these doctrines of *grace* and of *duty*, more firmly now, if possible, than ever before; except only with regard to the *limitation* of the covenant of redemption, as not according to the eternal purpose of God.

What has lain on his mind with increasing pressure is this. When he had exhibited to his audience the infinite fulness and all-sufficiency of Christ to save sinners, both by price and by power; and the great duty of every sinner to believe it to the salvation of his soul, then to tell them; “*Many sinners, many alas! are left out of the*”
“*covenant of redemption; many for whom Christ*”
“*never died.* A part only are comprehended, a
“*very few in comparison, as we have reason*”
“*to believe, or at least to fear. How many we*”
“*cannot say, nor who they are. God will cer-*”
“*tainly make such as are elected, to believe,*”
“*by his own almighty power and grace; and*”
“*he will most certainly leave all the rest to*

“ eternal damnation as their sins justly deserve :
“ for they were never comprehended in the de-
“ cree of God or the covenant of redemption and
“ salvation.” I have been more and more pressed
and perplexed in my own mind, with regard
to the consistency of this manner of preaching
with itself, or with the word of God. I have
often taken up the objections that have been
brought against it, and have attempted to re-
move them in the common way, and done it
to as general satisfaction, perhaps, as other
preachers.

The arguments used to silence these objections
are so trite and familiar with every one, that I
need only hint at them now. I have told my au-
dience that we all justly deserve to be eternally
miserable ; that God was not obliged to save any ;
that he is a just, absolute sovereign : the reprobate,
or non-elect have no cause to impeach
God of any injustice ; they shall receive only the
due reward of their deeds ; that they may believe
if they will ; that it is the wickedness of their
hearts, their wills, and dispositions that hinders
them ; the heart at enmity with God ; and that
this is so far from being their reasonable excuse,
that it is their just, and most awful condemnation ;
that they have no business with God's secret,
eternal decree, or the extent of the covenant
of redemption, and the number given to Christ
therein, and for whom alone he died ; that they
must attend only to what God has revealed ; that
he will have all men to be saved ; that he
taketh no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.

But that he would turn and live ; that he plainly commandeth all men every where to repent, and believe to the saving of their souls ; that the secret decree of God can have no influence on their wills, and ought to have none on their conduct. So I have gone through with all the common arguments as other ministers of the gospel have so often done. These the reader has all by heart, if he has paid any tolerable attention to the common preaching of calvinistic divines.

My audience have generally almost to a man set down satisfied. Yet, at evening, much perplexity hath invaded my own mind ; thoughts have thus returned upon me. I have this day told my audience, making no difference, and without the exception of a single person, that if we do not believe that God hath given to us eternal life in his Son, we make him a liar ; and quoted the evangelist John in support of it. I have told them, that they have, every one alike, all the warrant, that the God of truth can give them, to believe to eternal life ; and that it is the greatest of all sin not thus to believe. I have told them that their acting this faith on the Son of God, can lay no foundation at all, but is wholly built on an eternal foundation already laid, the immutable truth of God in his Son. I have told them they must so believe ; they have right to, they ought to do it ; and then every one of them shall be

saved. When upon the *limitarian* plan, I know not that one tenth part of them, or even one of them was ever included in the covenant of redemption, or given to Christ, or that he ever died for one soul of them.

Ought I not to have known for whom among them Christ did indeed die, before I gave out this doctrine; and then to have addressed the same to them only? or ought I not, at least, to have spoken hypothetically and said; *if you are of the number of the elect*, you have full warrant and ground to believe to salvation. Otherwise there is no foundation laid in Christ for your faith; but, on the contrary, you will make God a liar in so believing, as you will believe what he knows is not true, viz. that every soul that hears the gospel has a foundation for his saving faith, laid in Christ?

I have told my audience that the number given to Christ, and for whom he died, is a secret that belongs to God only, and not at all to them. And, that it is their great duty to make their calling and election sure. I have quieted their minds, but not my own. For I cannot avoid many thoughts which have never occurred to their minds, on the *limitarian* plan. I cannot help seeing, that although, *on this plan*, the number and the names are a secret with God alone; yet the principles are what I have been preaching. I have asserted them as revealed in the word of God, I have proclaimed them aloud, as the will of God; and now how, alas! shall I reconcile them in harmonious truth?

I can very willingly let alone the *number* and the *names*; that fits easy on my mind. But what shall I do with the principles I have advanced, as things revealed and belonging to every sinner in the world? How can I, on these principles, these revealed doctrines, invite and command every sinner to believe to salvation, and, in the name of Christ too, tell every one, without exception, that Christ has laid a foundation for this universal faith and salvation; when I believe he did, in his death, lay a foundation only for a part; that only a part are given to him, and that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ?" Many similar thoughts have unavoidably pressed into my mind, after I have been preaching the gospel in the limitarian line.

The learned reader will readily recollect the way that several learned and pious divines have taken to free themselves from this perplexity. They assert, that all sinners are commanded to believe that which has *no truth* in it, antecedent to their believing it; and that in the devout and obedient exercise of their minds in believing, *that* is turned into a glorious, saving truth, which had no truth in it when their minds first began to work upon it. This they say is a most *inconceivable, astonishing mystery*. I think so too, and can get no relief to my own mind in that way. If I could believe without previous truth, and make truth by believing, I should believe myself into the enjoyment of many agreeable things, temporal as well as spiritual: Yet even men of no

less worth than, Messrs. *Boston, Marshall, Hervey,* and others I might name, have taken that refuge; and merely, no doubt, because they could not possibly reconcile the *limitarian* doctrines of salvation in any other way.

These embarrassments in my mind, have induced me to look, most attentively, into all opinions that have ever been found among all sects that embrace divine revelation; and especially the *monomian* and the *arminian* tenets. But, on the most thorough investigation, I find these inconsistent with divine revelation, and the necessary attributes of God; also with the relation of man to his Maker; and with his entire, absolute, and everlasting dependence on God. Still, the evidences, and even demonstrations of the truth, and divinity of the sacred oracles are so clear, that I can never renounce my firm faith in them. I also find, in reading all books of divinity that ever I saw, that the main, leading sentiments in them, will most inevitably infer the same extensive doctrine of grace and salvation that is here advanced: were all just and necessary consequences drawn from those foundation principles which all unite in. But, few just consequences have been drawn, and many things said by *limitarians*, of all denominations, in full and plain opposition to the foundation principles which they hold.

After all researches, I have recurred to the word of God alone. There I find a most glorious, and astonishing system, and exhibitions of divine wisdom, power and love; most harmoniously consistent with itself, and with all the divine attri-

lutes, with pure reason, and with God's conduct in the universe ; and in a most blessed way, accommodated and adapted to guilty, miserable man, in all the depth of his *entire impotency* and guilt : A complete Savior undertaking to deliver him alike from both ; and that in such a merciful and glorious extent, that I can in the name of Christ, command every human creature, under heaven, to believe in such a Savior, and promise him, on the same authority, he shall be saved by him.

I can now preach the gospel to *every creature* ; i. e. I can tell every human creature under heaven, *Good news to HIM*. I can tell every creature of a Savior as complete to *give him* the *qualification*, as to make the *atonement* ; to give repentance as well as forgiveness of sins, alike engaging and ensuring both, by covenant with his Father. A blessed Savior, that hath made his salvation sure, before lost sinners ever thought any thing about it ; and that did all the work alone without their doing any thing. That, by the power of his own spirit, he setteth sinners to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling : not at all to make it more sure, than he has made it in the covenant of redemption, and the atonement ; but only, to communicate the knowledge, and comfort of it to them, and to apply the benefit, by working in them a moral capacity to enjoy it.

Hence I can bid them, in the name of Christ, to work out their own salvation with

fear and trembling : for it is God that worketh in them both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure. I can tell them that the grace of God, alone, brings salvation to their sight and trust ; and that this, in a way of *native consequence*, teaches them to deny ungodliness and every worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Because this is God's way, and the only fit way in which God brings them to the final, heavenly inheritance, and makes them meet to be partakers of it. Also, because it is most reasonable, and an exceeding great pleasure and delight to them while on the way : And as in all respects it is most agreeable to the natures God has given them ; to their moral agency ; and to the honor of his own name, to bring them to the enjoyment of all the sure benefits of redeeming love and grace in such a way.

On this ground, I can assure them that God hath given to us *fallen men* eternal life, and this life is in his Son ; and he that believeth not this record, *whosoever he be*, hath made God a liar. So I can charge any unbeliever with the greatest blame, for not believing *immediately* to the saving of his soul, i. e. to a sense and enjoyment of gospel salvation. And I can pronounce every unbelieving sinner damned, i. e. most justly and awfully condemned while in unbelief. But on the limitarian plan, I can charge no sinner with any thing amiss, for not believing to his own salvation ; unless I first know, that he is one

that is comprehended in their partial and much limited covenant of redemption, or one of the few, or the party, be it more or less, for whose eternal salvation Christ died.

The more I have thought on these things, the more I am convinced of the utter inconsistency of the general preaching of protestant divines, on any other ground than this. *Christ died alike for all. And all mankind are alike included in the most glorious and merciful covenant of redemption.*

I suppose, at the same time, that it is not expedient that gospel preachers should dwell much on this point, viz. proving that God will indeed bring all the fallen race, in his own time, out of their blindness, guilt, and misery, to the knowledge and enjoyment of salvation; or that Christ will in his own way and time, draw all men unto him, in the plainest sense of the words. But rather to dwell much, and mainly, on the nature and character of God, and that of fallen man, and the way of salvation for such a miserable race; with all the duties, and obligations, hopes, and expectations resulting from these thoughts.

The great things we want to know, are what God is; and what we are; and how we may please God; and in what way we may be saved. Merely to know how many, or how few, shall be brought to glory is no part of our saving knowledge. But to know the way to

heaven, by saving experience, is the great thing we all need. This is just the same in my view of salvation; as on that of the protestant world in general, ever since the reformation from popery. Nor should I think it expedient to publish the following sheets, at least at this time, were it not that I find I cannot vindicate divine revelation on any other plan. I likewise find many inquisitive minds, deeply concerned about things of eternal consequence, pressed with the same embarrassment.

I am well aware, that such an open *advancing* step to pour light into the minds of men; though it is no other, in the nature of it, than what has been many times done, may, as in former times, in all probability, be an occasion of great alarms in the minds of many pious, good people. Among the rest, (which is to me most disagreeable in prospect) several of my dearest and most valuable friends and connections will probably be more wounded by this publication, or at least more aggrieved, than any other persons on my account.

But there is a wonderful force in important truth, pressed home on the human mind with full conviction. When HE who ruleth the spirits of all men, is determined to make it appear to the world, he always makes the truth press so hard on the human mind as to find vent. Witness the case of *Elihu*, *Jeremiah*, *Paul*, and many others. Job, 32. Jer. 20. Acts, 18. The most of those, whom God has made instruments

to give additional light and guidance to his church and to the world, have felt much reluctance on the part of human nature and worldly considerations, from the days of *Moses* to the present day. BUT almighty God always finds an effectual way to draw out of their souls, whatever he is pleased to pour in with special design for the benefit of mankind. It is doubtless by connection and acquaintance with the people of God, that the gentiles, in every part of the world, got this idea of their prophets, sybils, and augurs, in all ages. The celebrated Roman poet, as the learned will recollect, paints this thought most beautifully in the case of his prophets, in the sixth book of his *Æneid*. And I apprehend, we may well maintain the doctrine of such a forcible energy on the mind, in these cases, without giving any countenance to enthusiasm, in the more common acceptation of the word.

What now appears, is a small part of a SYSTEM of DIVINITY, which the author has been meditating more than *twenty years*. A critical view of the religion of the covenant people of God, in every age, and in every part of the world, where divine revelation has been embraced; and also of the mythology of all the nations of the earth that have not been favored with the sacred oracles, fell naturally in the way of his contemplations, as he was proceeding on a very extensive scale. What he un-

dertook was with no other view, than for his own improvement; as he has ever found the use of the pen of very special service to his own mind.

Innumerable criticisms on the original languages in which the sacred oracles were first written, are left out in this publication. Because our English bible is so well done, in the last translation, that there is not one verse, or sentence in it, that will misguide any common, English reader, in any material thought. And because, on the contrary, the author did, and does still suppose, that such a number of criticisms, as he found his own thoughts naturally led into, would, if inserted, much bewilder the minds of most of his readers. And lastly, this would much swell the volume, and embarrass any printer in this country, for want of proper types, and practice.

The following TREATISE is not divided into chapters and sections according to the more common way in later times; but is on the plan of the more ancient compositions. Moreover, the reader will find in many places, that a particular thought, or argument, is taken up and pursued as far as the present connection required; then laid aside for the present, and resumed again, in another connection, and enlarged upon in separate parts of the volume, with distinct views, and in various connections. This is no more repetitions, than if each thought, or argument had been wholly finished in one place by it-

self. This method, was chosen because the author's desire was to help the reader, as much as possible, to carry along in his mind to the end of the whole, every material idea, without the loss of any.

The author is quite beyond a doubt, in his own mind, with regard to the solid truth of his leading principles and arguments ; though he supposes that inaccuracies may be discerned by the more critical part of his readers. With respect to the *due time* of advancing this step forward, and so explicitly pouring in this additional light, he is not so positive.

There are, however, several considerations that have weight in my mind, to make the publication without further delay ; such as these. I have spent more than *twenty years* in the most careful reading and attention to every thing relating to this subject ; and, I think, with a single eye, and ardent desire to know the truth, and to avoid all false reasoning, and every groundless conclusion. *I have no interest but in the truth.* I am in the same predicament, with regard to the *due time* of publication, that all men since the days of inspiration have been. Any author may misjudge, after his greatest possible exercise of judgment in the matter. Some have done it, as the great and learned *Huff*, who was one century before the *due time*, in attempting to pour in a flood of light upon the world. He offered nothing to the public but what

was advanced in the next century by *Luther, Calvin,* and others with glorious success. I consider that if all students will refrain publication, in advancement of light and knowledge, until they are quite certain the most proper time is come; every thing of this kind must be at an end. Also that when God's own time is come, for new acquisitions of knowledge, even then, it is his wife and holy pleasure, that truth should beat its way through very considerable opposition, and that the leaders in it should meet with little thanks, and no comfortable reward, from the world in general.

Besides all this, I regard the marvellous hand of divine providence, since my own day of observation, as leading into new acquisitions of every kind more rapidly than in any former period of time. A spirit of *enquiry, of light and liberty,* does wonderfully increase. And it hath been my steadfast opinion, with the venerable Edwards and others, who, as I apprehend, have written best on the prophecies, relating to the latter day glory, that the glorious millennium is now dawning, and hath been ever since the reformation from popery; and that when six thousand years from the creation of the world are completed, the sun will fairly arise, even the sun of righteousness in all his divine glory. That time now draws near. The second or third generation from us may, some of them, behold that blessed day.

I am further fully persuaded, that the glorious and universal revival, and power of true religion in that day, will not be brought on so much by the awful thunderings of divine wrath, and threatnings of hell and damnation, as by leading the blind fearful minds and guilty souls of men to see and know the true character of God, and the Savior. When the world shall know the living and true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; then a sense and enjoyment of life eternal will abound, and the cords of love will effectually draw dead sinners to holiness and virtue.

The reader may naturally expect that I should take notice of several writers of late, and some former writers, on the subject of the *universal redemption* and *final salvation* of the human kind; both in support of the sentiment, and in opposition thereto. I suppose I have read them all, from the great *Augustine* (who advanced the foundation arguments in support of this doctrine, with greater strength of mind, than any have done since) down to the present day. Several learned men have written on the subject, in Europe and America; some on one side of the question and some on the other. I have purposely omitted any particular remarks on either: principally because it appears to me, that none of them ever sufficiently attended to the subject to write with full pertinency upon it. Though, at the same time, the author re-

gards them as much greater and better men than himself, and would think himself honored to set at their feet, to receive instruction in any matters they have *fully* attended to.

THE LEADING THOUGHTS, on which the following TREATISE is built, may be divided into the following particulars. *The attributes of God. His own fixed eternal purposes. His covenant of redemption with the Son of his love. The full and proper contrast between the first, and second federal head of mankind. The doctrine of a true and proper imputation of guilt and righteousness. The co-extensive offices of Christ, as prophet, priest, and king. The just desert of sin. The voice of God's holy law, and that of the gospel, sounding throughout the whole of divine revelation. The law wholly satisfied in Christ. The GOSPEL announcing these GLAD TIDINGS. The nature and office of regeneration, saving faith, and repentance unto life. The indispensable necessity of internal holiness. The awful damnation of all while unregenerate. The only way, in which God will save sinners, and the infinite reasonableness of it. The great power of a real acquaintance with the salvation of God, to move the heart to all holiness and virtue; and to regulate the whole life. The absolute, and everlasting dependance of all the human race on him that made them. And the everlasting glory that will redound to God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in this great salvation.*

The above are the principal, leading thoughts,

illustrated by a variety of arguments; which are indeed but a very small part of all those that might have been adduced, with equal force, from the nature of God and from his word.

The author has one request to make to all that may see, or hear of this book. He asks that none would either *approve* or *condemn* it, until after a careful reading. And that all, who may have read it with attention, and then speak freely their own opinion concerning it, as every one in that case has good right to do, would also communicate this humble request from the author, to all such as have knowledge of it only by report. This is a just claim, which every man has on his fellow-men; and which every humane, candid mind will readily grant. The author is the more emboldened to make it, as he never could endure to violate the same principle himself, with regard to any writings he has ever seen or heard of. Having intimated these things as introductory, the reader is now led to a direct and immediate consideration of the subject.



A
T R E A T I S E

O N

UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

THE sacred scriptures, or the two testaments, are certainly the very dictates of God to men, on the most interesting matters. God hath spoken as became himself to speak, things most important to the human kind; and things in the most perfect consistency, through the whole of divine revelation. The great design of it is, that the divine Being and character may be manifested, in the clearest possible manner, for the display of his own glory; and mankind guided thereby to the true end of their existence, even the knowledge and enjoyment of God the supreme and consummate good. The duty and happiness of man are inseparably united in the sacred oracles.

It is of the utmost importance to the

D

comfort of man, to have his mind open, and unbiassed with regard to the truth, heartily engaged to find the very truth, and embrace it with supreme love, for its own sake. This is "a good and honest heart." This is "receiving truth in the love of it." Alas ; how hard an attainment for man in his present state !

Now any man that can read the word of God with open candor, will see, that there are two capital points of instruction running through the whole of it, as things to be believed ; and that every where virtue, or holiness of heart and life is enjoined upon us, as matter of practice, enforced with the strongest reasons and motives.

THE two great doctrines we are taught to believe, are, *First*, What it is just and right for God to do with us, considered in our own personal character, and desert. This I shall call the pure voice of justice to man, without regard to an atonement, or a mediator. *Secondly*, What God will *in fact* do with mankind, as united to a mediator, and one with him by divine constitution, in a federal sense : Or how, in very deed, God hath promised to deal with man, in that union with the second Adam : What his condition shall certainly be, in this life, and the life to come. This I call pure gospel ; or tidings from God, which never could have been known but by his own revelation.

It will also appear that these two capital points are, throughout the whole bible, kept

in constant view, running *side by side*, in open sight, from the beginning to the close of the sacred oracles. These points are very different from each other, yea directly opposite, except only as harmonizing in Christ, which is the most wonderful mystery of the gospel, and the grand distinguishing doctrine of divine revelation.

TAKE a few instances of this direct opposition of sentiment, if literally understood, in an immediate and direct import, without any regard to a mediator, an atonement, or a federal constitution.—“In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” “And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years.” “Every man shall die for his own sins.” “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” “God will by no means clear the guilty.” “I, even I am he that blotteth out your sins, for mine own sake.” The reader that is well acquainted with the book of divine revelation, will think of thousands of plain assertions, as much to the purpose as these; and every fair reasoner will own that words and ideas cannot be set in more full opposition, if taken in one and the same, plain, immediate, literal sense. Yet we find not the least difficulty in reconciling all these with each other, and with the truth, when we bring them into one proper analogy: We easily see one harmonious, perfectly consistent scheme, running through the whole.

BUT, it will abundantly appear in the sequel, that we must keep our ear open to

the voice of pure justice to man, as he deserves out of Christ ; also to the voice announcing what shall in very deed, through infinite grace, take place with respect to man in Christ : Or it will be wholly in vain for all the wit, and art in the world, to make any thing better of the holy scriptures, than a long, solemn, series of the most palpable contradictions. I have, with the utmost caution, and deepest attention, long consulted the sacred oracles ; and, perhaps, all of essential consequence, that has been written on them, since the christian æra, in various languages ; and I freely confess that, without the clue, just named, I must set down in deism : But, with it, the whole book of God, *how true ! how beautiful ! how glorious !*

THE whole word of God. centers in Christ, and is sealed in his blood ; the law, and gospel, otherwise opposite, are brought into perfect union ; righteousness and peace embrace each other ; and this display shines, in perpetual and glorious symmetry, through the old and new testaments.

BUT now, to resume the capital argument already alluded to.

WE begin with the first threatening ever denounced against man, on condition of his rebellion, Gen. ii. “ In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” I believe the more common construction of this commination, by protestant divines, is right, viz. that total death, temporal and spiritual, was to take place on all human nature, on that very day ; and eternal death

then begin, and be confirmed and made sure to all human nature, without the least intimation of remedy or relief, to endless duration. I fully believe this construction is just, and abundantly supported in the holy scriptures.

HOWEVER, as I am acquainted with many learned, and ingenious criticisms on the words, needless here to remark upon, I will take a construction in which all agree as far as it extends; and which will answer what I am now aiming at, as well as that which is more agreeable to my own mind. It is certainly true, as far as it goes; though I suppose it does not contain the whole truth. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Let the sense be allowed as in the paraphrase: viz. "In the day thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt become mortal, even thou Adam, and all human nature now in thee. Thy soul also, shall sustain great damage and unhappiness, that is, spiritual death, in some awful degree, without the least ground of hope that the case shall ever become any better with thee, (with the human kind,) to endless duration. Be assured of no felicity for thee; nothing better than sorrow and woe; or, at the utmost, no greater relief than extinction of being." I grant this explanation of the words, at present, for two reasons; the one is, it is certainly true as far as it extends; though it by no means comprehends the whole: And the other is, because all that regard the word of God, will ac-

quiesce in it thus far, while most will carry it much further. It will plainly appear, that whether this, or the more common idea be taken from the words, it will have one and the same aspect, in support of the following argument: Inasmuch as there can be nothing plainer than that the threatening never did fully take place, on *mere man* in his own person, and never will; and that God never designed it as the *voice of certain fact*, on mere man; but as the voice of pure justice alone.

I HOPE, that I cannot be misunderstood in the use of these phrases, “*the voice of justice*,” and “*the voice of fact* ;” or, “*language of law, and language of gospel*,” with respect to man: Or, “*what ought in justice to be done, and what, in God’s sovereign mercy, harmonizing with justice, shall be done.*” I can think of no terms more accurate, and I find the distinction frequent among civilians and divines, viz. “*De jure, and de facto*,” which distinction has been found necessary in many cases; and is, as will appear throughout the whole of this essay, quite essential to a right understanding of divine revelation, or even maintaining it with any possible consistency.

Now if any will say, that the threatening did take place on the day of the rebellion, *in full*, according to the plain sense in which God made Adam to understand him, when he uttered the words; or agreeable to pure justice in the law alone, or ever will take place, on mere mankind personally, or just

as Adam expected ; their minds are, at present, not in a condition to be reasoned with. God had a most glorious and merciful reserve in his own mind, on the preconcerted plan of eternal, redeeming wisdom and love, which he did not communicate to man when he placed him under his holy law ; and which he did begin to intimate “ in the cool of the day,” at the very time when Adam expected the full threatening would have taken place. There was no other possible way for God to have suspended the immediate execution of it, consistent with his own most holy nature and character. He had provided a way, in which all he had said, might and certainly would be verified on man in a *vicar*, a *substitute*, a *second Adam*, or covenant head, in *due time* to be dignified by personal union with the eternal LOGOS, or WORD. That, on him, the whole weight of the curse should fall, vindicating the truth of Deity in threatening, though never executed on mere man as Adam expected, and as the plain *voice of justice* denounced ; which Adam then thought was inseparable from the *voice of fact* ; having not the least intimation, when he was placed under the holy law, that there could ever be any separation of *pure justice*, from *very fact*, with regard to man : Nor would any man, or any angel ever have thought of such a distinction ; or any possible way to make it, consistent with the immutable truth of God, if God himself had not contrived and revealed it. Here

we have the two grand pillars of divine revelation. God displayed in an *absolute character*, without any intimation of a mediator; this is moral law and all-glorious. And God displayed to man in a mediator; this is gospel, *pure gospel*, and exceedeth in glory.

IN a right understanding of these grand points, we are led into a harmonious, and consistent view of the whole word of God. We find the law and the gospel displayed side by side, through the whole. The law every where sounds with awful terror in accents of pure justice, towards man, without a Savior. The gospel is all mere news, and good news, glad tidings, through a mediator, which man would never have heard or thought of, if God had not made the proclamation. The moral law every where speaks to man in his own personal character; the gospel in that of the Messiah. The law tells what man in justice deserves, in his own personal character; the gospel, what the Son of man, the Son of God deserves, and that he is by divine constitution "a covenant for the people, and God's salvation to the ends of the earth;" and that the head of *every man* is Christ. This intimation began on the day of the rebellion, and at that time was but dark, and for wise reasons, which will appear in the sequel.

THE divine law enjoining perfect obedience, on pain of endless misery, runs through the whole of divine revelation from beginning to end; and so does the gospel,

exhibiting a salvation fully tantamount. There is as much of the gospel in the old testament as in the new ; and as much of the law in the new testament as in the old. The latter dispensation hath the whole substance of the former, and nothing for the *matter* of it new : The former hath, in like manner, the whole of the latter, and nothing for substance has ever been done away, or ever will be, until the mystery of God shall be finished. The new testament is only a new edition of the old, in much greater clearness.

FOUR things are obvious in the grand design of divine revelation, viz. To manifest, and hold clearly in our view the absolute and rectoral character of God. The character of fallen man. His duty. And God's eternal; fixed and gracious purpose concerning him, through the whole of his interminable existence. The three former of these pertain to the law of God ; the last to the gospel ; and is all pure gospel, or good news.

IN the law we see God's all-glorious, and infinitely perfect character as law giver ; as also the infinitely hateful, and most abominable *moral character* of fallen man ; and the reasonable duty of man to be wholly conformed to the moral image of God, and keep his whole law, without any deficiency ; and what he deserves, and what the voice of justice is concerning him, if he is found wanting in the least. "Curfed is every one

that continueth not in *all things* written in the book of the law to do them," is the invariable sentence of the law every where.

Now this manifestation of God, and of man's duty, and his guilt, runs through the whole bible, old and new testament; just as much in the one as in the other; but much more conspicuous, for the *manner of discovery*, in the latter.

ON the other hand, the gospel begins in the third chapter of divine revelation, (as the law does in the second,) and runs through all the old testament, in types, figures, prophecies, &c. The gospel is all *mere news*, and *good news*; and it tells what man never would have thought of, if he had not been told it; nor believed, were told of it, had it not come with sufficient authority. The gospel is *pure tidings**; and more, it is *good tidings*.† Whatever is law, in any part of sacred writ, is founded on the nature and character of God, adapted to man's nature, and his relation to God. Whatever is gospel, in any part of the bible, is founded wholly on Jesus Christ, his character and offices, and adapted to the condition of man, *in all his guilt and misery*, and in all his desperate impotency.

It has pleased infinite wisdom, always to make out his promises to mankind in a covenant way, or under a federal head, or representative.

Thus it was in the first man, and thus in

* Ἀγγελία.

† Εὐαγγέλιον.

his contracted anti-type Jesus Christ, as is most evident from Rom. chap. 5, and many other parts of sacred scripture. Thus it was in Noah, Gen. chap. 9, and with Abraham, Gen. 17. And with David as a type of Christ, Psal. 89. Never, since the fall, can any individual take hold of any promise of spiritual good, but in a fœderal way; and certainly the grand curse including in it virtually all other curses, came in this way: As the reader will see to full demonstration in its proper place.

It has been observed before, that God keeps up the language of justice towards man in his awful guilt. He keeps the voice of strict justice sounding in his ears, through the whole book of divine revelation, and that, no doubt, that man may know and feel what he is, and have an heart to receive the voice of grace, *as grace*; or feeling himself infinitely vile, may bid a becoming welcome to mere, sovereign mercy. The law speaks in righteousness; every where denounces what is *just* and *equal* towards man. It thunders aloud the true desert of man. But it speaks not what shall *in fact* take place on man, and his surety both; or *on man at all*, in faith and union with Christ; or any otherwise than in his surety; any more than the original curse did, in the garden of Eden, which was noticed before. Yet it is manifest, that the wisdom of God saw fit, for a time, to leave man in such ignorance and darkness of mind, that he should mistake that which was spoken only as the

voice of justice, for a declaration of *very fact*, which should inevitably come upon himself. Man most naturally fell into this misunderstanding, from the inward sense of horrible guilt, in his own soul, and so was exercised with great torment, in a way of servile fear. Great sense of guilt will make an object of fear which hath no other existence ; “ the wicked fear where no fear is.”

It is not for man to account for all the reasons of the divine conduct, though it is well for us, with humble adoration, to go as far in this way as we can. It is a certain fact, however, that God hath chosen to give light and comfort to miserable, blind sinners of mankind, by slow degrees.

THERE WAS some light, some comfort, derived to our first parents from what they heard God say to the serpent, relative to the opposite seed, and the victory announced. The law, and the gospel were both promulgated in paradise. The voice of law then sounded much the loudest ; but it has been the manifest will of heaven, that the sound of the gospel should gradually gain upon that of the law, from that day to the finishing of the mystery of God.

By the institution and import of sacrifices in paradise, and cloathing the naked, shameful, pair in their skins ; and by the sacrifices continued down to the flood ; and by the preaching of Enoch and Noah ; and by oral instructions, &c. the light and comfort of divine grace had some gradual increase, while the law, as we know, still

founded very terrible. See the epistle of Jude.

By the type of the ark ; the salvation of the church therein ; the covenant made with all mankind in Noah ; and by the rainbow as a token sealing the whole, the good report was considerably louder and clearer than ever before.

IN the covenant made with Abraham, the light of the gospel increased. For all, of this nature, was *very gospel* from the first ; *in nature* the same with that preached after the descent of the Holy Ghost at pentecost, only much more obscure, in *manner* and *degree*. God's promise of a son to that patriarch, to be given in such a wonderful way ; and of the *church*, a *numerous seed*, through him ; the promise of the land of Canaan, &c. all gave further instruction, with regard to that most interesting concern of man, the redemption and salvation of the guilty soul.

AT the giving of the law on mount Sinai, and the institution of all the rites and sacrifices of the mosaic œconomy, both law and gospel were made much plainer than before : the moral law, or ten commandments, to enlighten and awaken God's people, teach them their duty, convince them of their awful deficiency, the justice of their condemnation, and their utter impotency and absolute dependance on God : And the ceremonial law, all the rituals, sacrifices, types and shadows, pointing to Christ, the great anti-type, "the end of the law for righteous-

nels, to every one that believeth." This exhibited the gospel, or doctrine of atonement and free grace, with increasing perspicuity; and is well called "a school-master to bring us to Christ."

FROM this time down to the fulness of time, in which Christ came, God sent among his people a great number of prophets, every one of whom cast some light on the law, and gave some further knowledge of the gospel. Among these, David, Isaiah, and Daniel, were very eminent. The light of divine revelation, both law and gospel, was much augmented, by John the harbinger of Christ. The Messiah in his own person, doctrines, deeds, and sufferings, made the whole will of God, relating to a guilty world, the methods of his grace, and all the purposes of his love, still far more conspicuous; so clearly expressive, that "his name is well called *the word of God*."

THE light of the same gospel which had been, by degrees, exhibited from the days of paradise, was much increased in the apostolic times, by the more abundant effusion of the holy spirit; by the preaching of the apostles, far and wide; by their writings, filling up the sacred canon. So that the least teacher under this *new dispensation*, was better instructed than the greatest under the *old*; and understood the doctrines of the kingdom of heaven, better than John the promised Elias. Matt. xi.

AND, when the gospel door was set open to *all nations* of the earth, as well as to the

Jews, the doctrine was so strange, so far beyond all the notions of grace and salvation, ever entertained among the covenant people of God; and so exceedingly mortifying to the pride of their hearts, that it was abhorred and rejected. Just as it now would be, should one assert in the most obvious and plainest sense, that "God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth:" Or, as if a modern believer should assert without any construction of his own, and with all the simplicity of an old patriarch, that Christ died, "not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD." Indeed, when Jesus first gave this intimation, they who had just been gazing at him with pleasing wonder, were so chagrined at the idea that a whole world of *heathen dogs* should be set on a footing, as respectable as themselves, that they wished him nothing better than instant death. Luke iv. They could not bear the thought of losing their fancied monopoly, on which they so much valued themselves.

THE motive, why the Jews were more malicious persecutors of Christ, and the primitive christians, than other men, was quite natural to all mankind. It was not because they were worse than other men, or more malicious by nature; but they had been so long honored of God, and distinguished by peculiar *privileges*, that they felt *them* in their hearts as a monopoly: Even as a man descended from an ancient, noble family, has no idea that it is fit, in the

course of providence, that the children of beggars immemorial, should ever become as rich and noble as himself and his posterity. This is human nature in every age. Any doctrine, that will place poor, shameful creatures, who have in time past been most neglected of God, in the holy, sovereign dispensation of his providence, on a level with us, with regard to grace and favor yet to come ; and would break down all barriers which inclose us in the palaces of distinction and honor, will set on our hearts, just as *like* doctrines did on the hearts of the favored children of Abraham, in days of yore.

It has pleased infinite wisdom, however, to cause the light of salvation to increase, down to the present day ; though not in every age, or every period of time alike. There have been remarkable æras, in which something like a flood of light has poured into the world, and, at certain times, darkness and ignorance have rather gained ground. But, on an average, light hath been growing, in all sciences ; and the light of the gospel, the light of salvation in particular.

I HAVE already observed remarkable periods and dispensations, down to the close of the sacred canon. After that, there was a gradual increase of knowledge for about three hundred years. Then, for a time, the darkness in general, seemed to gain upon the light ; and sometimes gross darkness seemed as if it would overspread the world. Yet God kept up, in his church, some lumi-

naries at all times. There never passed one century, without some great, godly, learned man, who, perhaps advanced somewhat further than his fathers; witness the Waldenses, and Albigenes, in the darkest period; also, *Hufs, Luther, Calvin, &c.* And, since the days of these eminent luminaries, there has been an unremitting advancement of knowledge. I believe I may say, not one year has elapsed without some increase of gospel light, as well as of every other science. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

THE last, and present centuries have been productive of many great and learned inquirers after truth, who have been happily successful. At the head of them we may place, in Europe, the incomparable *Owen*, and, in America, the immortal *Edwards*; men of the same turn of mind, and much the same channel of thinking. These men grasped the whole circle of science in a remarkable manner. And, by the way, every careful reader will see, that they held all the foundation principles of salvation, on which this *treatise* is supported, just as I do; though they drew not the same consequences, however fully and fairly implied: And like all others, that have advanced forward and beat the way, they met with vast opposition. For the moral world is like the natural; he that breaks up new ground, meets with great resistance from the hard bound, stubborn soil; after a few years cultivation, the plough runs easy.

I MAY NOW further consider the law, and the gospel. They were first promulgated, as I have said, very near together, in the garden of Eden, and they run through all the sacred oracles, *sic* by *sic*. God keeps them both, every where, in full view; yet they are as distinct in their natures as any two things in the universe.

WHATEVER is law, wheresoever found in sacred scripture, is a rule of absolute perfection, as high as the natures of moral agents can rise, in heart and conduct; on supposition they are wholly without any moral disorder, any want of perfect holiness, in the temper of their minds. This law every where denounces the infinite and everlasting wrath of God, and endless misery to man, in case of the least failure. The law knows nothing of mercy, or of mitigation. This is law, and it is "holy, just, and good."

THE gospel, on whatever page of sacred writ it is found, either in the old testament or new; whether in types, sacrifices, prophecies, epistles, or any other way; knows nothing at all of misery, or torment, or the punishment of any creature under heaven, I should have said, *any mere creature*. It speaks much of the distress, sorrow, pain, and punishment, of Jesus Christ, God-man; by the appointment of the Father, and his own free consent, set apart to suffer and die for the sins of the *whole world*: the anti-type of all the types in the ancient church; "the lamb slain from the foundation of the

world!" "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." On this one head, the gospel tells us of just as much "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish," as the whole law of God does from the beginning to the end of the bible. But, as to any mere man, the gospel says not one uncomfortable word; quite the reverse. Every word is a word of comfort, it is every where "*glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*" So Jesus as the prince of peace, and as the great preacher of it, and as mediator between God and sinners, says, "do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust."

THE VOICE of the whole law, and the voice of the gospel, are exceedingly distinct, and diametrically opposite. The law demands perfection; curses for want of it; and cries vengeance. The GOSPEL points out perfection; highly approves of it, and the imputation of it; and PROCLAIMS SALVATION. The law says do well, and thou shalt live. The gospel says thou shalt live, because Christ lives, and shalt do well. The moral law is no news at all; it is what our reason dictates and approves. The gospel is all news. We never should have thought of it, had it not come in a way of tidings from heaven. It is all good news; and there is not one word of bad news in it.* It is all good news to sin-

* Ἀγγελία, may be bad as well as good; but Εὐαγγέλιον, cannot be bad.

ners, to creatures that might never have expected a word of that kind. It is wholly glad tidings to hell deserving rebels, who could expect from God no tidings but very bad ; even as bad as their nature and ways, and as horrible as all their guilt.

HENCE it appears, that, when we are told of a *gospel law*, the meaning (to make any sense of it) must be the law spoken of in Jer. xxxi. 31, &c. and afterwards quoted by the apostle, Heb. viii. Even a living principle of obedience, wrought and excited by understanding and believing the gospel ; which will ever be the case, as will appear in the sequel. But, in a strict and proper sense of the phrase, (which is however not found in the bible) a *gospel law* signifies the condemning *power of good news*: Which, at best, carries an odd sound with it.

THE gospel tells us of the most important facts ; things of infinite weight and everlasting importance ; and things, in all respects, as independent of us, as any things we ever heard of transacted in *Asia*. The news that comes from heaven, is as independent of us, as if we should this day hear some news from the planet Saturn, well attested. All news makes its way into our minds, and commands our belief ; not according to our choice, but, by the weight of its own evidence. Thus it is with this emphatically, *good news*. God brings it to our souls with evidence enough when he pleases, and it has its effect, according to its nature and importance, as all other information has : The

heart being first prepared by almighty power.

It appears fit and worthy of God, to keep his law every where in our sight, in his revealed will ; that we may see the true character of Jehovah ; and our own character ; and our whole duty ; with the just consequences of departing from it, even endless misery, as great as our natures are capable of. Rebellion against such a God, violation of such obligations, justly merits *this*, or *nothing*.

If our obligations to obedience, are not infinite ; God is not a Being of infinite perfection and worthiness. To assert which, is equal to atheism ; for if there is not such a God, there is none. Our sin can be an infinite evil only in one sense ; as opposed to a Being of infinite perfection : For finite natures are not capable of dispositions, or deeds infinite in themselves. Our punishment can be infinite only in one sense, viz. endless duration : For finite natures are not capable of infinite pain, in any given time.

Thus, endless duration of torment, appears obviously just ; no more than we deserve ; and not in the least cruel for God to inflict. Should we, *in fact*, fall under it, every mouth would be stopped, and every soul would be convinced of such guilt before God, as to render this punishment equal, in reason and justice. And this must have been our doom, if another had not, by divine appointment, come in our place.

Now, as I hinted before, it is necessary that we know and feel this conviction, deep in our own souls, that we may receive *grace* as *grace*; and have proper impressions affecting all the powers of our souls, in the reception of mere, sovereign, *infinite mercy*.

To argue, as some do, that it is not *just* for God to punish us eternally, for transient sins in this world, is the perfection of absurdity; and arises from a total ignorance of God and ourselves, in the true character and relation of each.

WE proceed now to consult the word of God a little more attentively: Not what we imagine God ought to have said; but what he hath verily said. The sacred oracles came from God, and he hath said in them a great many things, which we should not have put in, had we made a bible. Many things in it appear, not only above my reason, but as opposite to it, as my command does to my little children when I tell them not to eat a certain fruit, which to them appears exceedingly pleasant, and greatly excites their appetites, and they have no sense of any harm in it, though I know it is poison. Or, when I bid them go to school, and not play, when, *to all their sense and understanding*, play is far more eligible.

THEY, who read sacred scripture, only with a view to make it speak what they judge it ought to speak, and that, after they have owned that it came from God, seem to me rather wanting in common sense, or

honesty. I am quite satisfied with what God has said, in its plainest meaning; and as well satisfied with it, if it is quite above my reason, as if it is otherwise. Yea, if wholly opposite to my best reasonings, I only thence infer my own ignorance and weakness, and fully believe and obey my God: even as I will have my little children believe what I tell them, and do what I bid them, though extremely contrary to their puerile ignorance and perverseness. There never was uttered a sentiment more just than this, “*The foolishness of God is wiser than men.*”

Now, does the bible plainly say that sinners of mankind shall be damned to *interminable punishment*? It certainly does; as plainly as language can express, or any man, or even God himself can speak. It is quite strange to me, that some who believe that all mankind shall in the end be saved, will trifle as they do with a few words, and most of all with the original word, and its derivatives, translated forever, &c.* All the learned know that this word, in the greek, signifies an *age*, a *long period*, or *interminable duration*, according as the connected sense requires. This word, with all its repetitions, sometimes signifies no more than a long, limited time; ages of ages; and sometimes, endless duration, when applied to the existence of Jehovah.† But there is

* ΑΙΨΩΝ.

† Rev. iv. 9. --- εἰς τὰς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

not the least need of any criticism on this word, or any other single word, or phrase, in the bible.

THERE are express propositions and assertions enough, in the word of God, to exclude any possible termination of the misery of the damned, as well as to assure us, in the plainest manner, that mankind shall be damned. Matt. v. Luke xii. Mark ix. In which chapters we are plainly taught, that sinners shall abide in hell until they can pay the debt they owe to divine justice ; which we know is forever impossible ; and that the fire shall *never* be quenched. Plain assertions of this tenor, are almost innumerable. They, therefore, who would deny that the endless damnation of sinners, is fully asserted in the word of God, are unfair in their reasonings and criticisms. Beside, all common sense indicates that if sinners deserve any punishment, they deserve an endless one. Their misery will be as everlasting as the happiness of the saints, and is expressed in the same words, Matt. xxv. Here it is plainly declared, that when final judgment is closed, they shall then “ go away into everlasting punishment.”

AGAIN ; does the bible plainly tell us that *all the human race shall certainly be saved*, and be happy forever, through the merits, power, and faithfulness of the Son of God ? *It does ; as fully and plainly, as it is possible for any language to express ; and that in several places.* John i. 29. “ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the

world." John iii. 17. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; BUT THAT THE WORLD THROUGH HIM MIGHT BE SAVED." John iv. 42. " - - - the Christ, the Savior of the world." John vi. 33. "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." John xii. 47. "And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not: For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." 1. John ii. 2. "And he is the propitiation for our sins: And not for ours only, but also for the SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD." 1. John iv. 14. "And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." All these are taken from only one of the sacred writers. It is certain, neither he, nor any other man could have spoken plainer, on supposition his only intention was, to assert the final salvation of every human creature. And never any person in the world, would have thought of putting a different construction on any of these passages, had it not been for a previous opinion, fully settled, that sinners of the human race shall personally, not vicariously be damned to all eternity. They build on as plain scripture assertions as are in the power of language, *in case a vicar or substitute be excluded*. But personal misery being a truth not in the least to be examined or scrupled by them; they have put a construction on whatever is expressly opposite,

as foreign to plain, common understanding, as the power of sophistry can invent. Not knowing any other way to make the whole of the bible true : It being referred by infinite wisdom to later times ; at least to be uttered with less reserve than in former times.

BESIDES plain assertions, as direct and brief as words are capable of, the doctrine of the personal salvation of all men is clearly taught more at large, and quite as fully, in many parts of divine revelation ; if we will only attend to them with a fair unbiassed mind.

WE should be likely to conclude, that if the people of *Sodom*, are finally saved, all sinners will be ; but their final salvation is fully asserted, though not as the ancient people of God understood the covenant of redemption and grace. Ezek. xvi. 53. "When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of *Sodom* and her daughters, and the captivity of *Samaria* and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them." Ver. 60, to the end of the chapter. "Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger : And I will give them unto thee for daughters ; but not by thy covenant. And I will establish my covenant with thee ; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD : That thou mayest remember and

be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God."

AND though, in the true sense of divine revelation they suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, as all sinners must; yet in this chapter it is plain enough, without any comment, that infinite, sovereign power and grace will finally triumph over the utmost guilt and wretchedness of Sodom. Not as man had thought; not as the Jews had ever understood the covenant of redeeming love. "NOT BY THY COVENANT."

IN the prophet Isaiah, salvation is fairly extended as far as the human race extend. Read chap. xi. and his prophecy at large. So it is in several passages in the other prophets. The point may be fairly inferred from the prophet, where God expressly tells us his will and disposition is the damnation of none, but the salvation of all: Since we know that by his own Son every obstacle, every claim of justice, every possibility of staining his own character, by saving whom he will, is wholly removed out of the way. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. "Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I HAVE NO PLEASURE in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die O house of Israel?"

WHAT would I have more, to secure my salvation, than the infinite power, infinite benevolence, and express will of God: Be-

ing assured, by the same God, that he can save me if he will, fully consistent with his own honor, and glory ; or that the way is clear and open, in and through Christ, for his infinite good will and all his attributes natural and moral, to be exerted and displayed to the highest advantage in my salvation? I take this reasoning from Paul. When he would engage us in the great duty of prayer, for the salvation of all men, heathen persecuting kings, and all men in authority, though many of their hands were daily stained with the blood of the saints ; he tells the church, they had a good foundation to pray for the final salvation of such men, and every vile sinner, on the face of the earth. It is that which is the only foundation of all our faith, and all our prayer ; the express *will of God*. 1. Tim. ii. at the beginning. Paul in the sixth verse tells us, that the time infinite wisdom had appointed for a free preaching, and a general understanding of this glorious doctrine, was future, “ *To be testified in due time.*”

HE well understood God’s wise method of gradation, in giving light and comfort to such miserable sinners. In the case of a poor, distressed criminal, condemned to die, and shuddering at his impending fate ; if there is a pardon for him, through the mercy of the Judge, it is kind to open to him the good news gradually ; lest the sudden shock be too mighty for him. Paul had no direction from his master to speak out clearly all he knew to be true ; therefore he ordinarily

used milk, and not strong meat ; though he had great store of it.

IN the fifth chapter to the Romans, Paul sets up Adam and Christ, each as a fœderal head of the human kind, as plainly as words can express ; and repeatedly declares, that salvation by Christ shall be quite as extensive, as ruin by Adam. No man in the world would ever have thought of any other construction of that chapter, had it not been for an antecedent, settled prejudice, that most of the human race shall certainly be damned *in their own persons*. Any one that will read the chapter, divested of such a prejudice of mind, will acknowledge the above representation is indisputable. But what will not a firm, fixed prejudice do ? It will even make us say, that “ *all men,*” signifies *a few men* ; and that “ *much more,*” means *much less*. Or it will lead us to read the 21st verse thus, “ That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace NOT reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

I HAVE NO idea that Paul could have spoken plainer than he did, 2. Cor. v. On supposition his design had been to announce the final salvation of all men, through the almighty power, and grace of God, and the infinite merits of Christ. 2. Cor. v. verse 18, to the end. “ And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation ; to wit, that God was in Christ, RECONCILING THE

WORLD UNTO HIMSELF, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." No man can make a comment on this ; for no words can make the passage plainer. Here is the all-sufficient atonement ; here is the infinite love of God, and his grace and mercy infinitely free ; his purpose fixed, and his power wholly irresistible ; and all so of God, that no creature, nothing found in any creature, can in the least set aside his immutable decree.

I HAVE discoursed with several that believed in the sovereign grace of God, in the widest extent ; but never saw one that was able to express the idea with so much precision, perspicuity and majesty, as Paul does. Coloss. i. 19, &c. " For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell ; and (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile ALL THINGS unto himself ; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and un-reproveable in his sight : If ye continue in

the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven ; whereof I Paul am made a minister." Perseverance is necessary to salvation ; that we know. God will take care of that. Lest there should be a possible idea of limitation, Paul assures us, that this gospel " was preached to every creature which is under heaven," i. e. to all *mankind* ; every other creature receiving as much advantage by *their* salvation, as disadvantage by *their* apostacy. And this is explanatory of Rom. viii. 19,—23. where the whole lower creation appears groaning under the total lapse of human nature, and obtaining full deliverance, in the universal restoration of the human kind.

It is exceedingly clear, that all who hear the gospel, are commanded to believe it ; that all who believe it, have life eternal, and have a witness of their title thereunto, on their believing ; that their believing, does not make the foundation of their faith and salvation more true than it was before ; but their faith is built on previous truth. This is the foundation, which neither faith nor infidelity in man, had any hand in laying, or can have any power to remove. For " if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful ; he cannot deny himself." 2. Tim. ii. 13.

IF we do not believe that to be true, the belief of which centers in a sure title to

salvation, we make God a liar. Any man in the world does this, that does not believe. But if God had not laid a sure foundation, for the sure eternal life of *all*; *some* would make him true in *not believing*; and a liar in *believing* it. John lets us know, that he that believeth not a record, or testimony, which, if believed, would give him a witness, make him sure of eternal life, maketh God a liar. Now, if faith does not create its own object, or lay its own foundation, what can be plainer, than that God hath made salvation as sure to sinners, *in the object and decree*, before they believe, as afterwards? But I cannot speak plainer than one divinely inspired. See 1. John, v. 10,—13. “He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. AND THIS IS THE RECORD, THAT GOD HATH GIVEN TO US ETERNAL LIFE: AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” The apostle here assures us, that we cannot have the sense, comfort and enjoyment of life, until we have the Son of God, in our souls, the object of our faith, and fountain of our life.

But, it is clear that neither our faith

or hope, can have any influence on the previous object of our faith, or foundation of our hope; both these are immutable and eternal. Let the state of our minds, at present, be whatever it may, "nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." And when we come to know the truth, then will follow, as a fruit and consequence, all holiness and virtue. "And let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity."

THE apostles, in all their preaching, commanded every one of their hearers to believe saving truth, on pain of damnation, knowing, at the same time, that their belief, or unbelief, would not in the least alter that truth. Yet their comfort in the truth, depended on their acquaintance with it, and belief of it; and without belief they must be damned. But Christ has engaged for their knowledge and belief of the truth, in his own time, as surely as he hath laid the foundation for it, or become the object of it. For his three great offices apply to every poor sinner alike. To whomsoever he is a priest, to him also he will be a prophet and a king. Illumination, regeneration, sanctification and perseverance to eternal life, are as *absolutely from God as the atonement was*. "All things are of God." "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever, Amen." The Redeemer of sinners, *so fallen as we are,*

faith it not in vain, “ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last. “ Let him that is athirst come: And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” He hath engaged to give the appetite, as well as its object: “ Him hath God exalted, with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Savior, for to *give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins*, i. e. to all given to Christ in covenant, all families of the earth in Abraham. Repentance and pardon, faith and justification, holiness and heavenly glory, are all alike the gift of the Son of God, and alike within his divine commission and engagement.

HERE the reader may wish to see the extent of the covenant, or engagement between the Father and the Son; whether it extends to all mankind, or only to a part. This shall be most carefully, and impartially attended to, in a proper place; as I would, at present, continue my chain of thought, on the apostolic manner of preaching, as well as the matter of it.

THE whole which the apostles preached, as gospel, was the atonement of Christ, and its whole import; with all things connected with it, and all the fruits and consequences of it. Indeed they kept the law every where in view, in all their preaching. The design of this was, that the hearts of men might be well disposed to receive and obey the gospel.

THE pure gospel which they preached, was just what I have now mentioned;

“ nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified,” i. e. the character and offices of Christ, with his obedience unto death, and the whole import of it. They held up Christ as a compleat Savior, in whom God shews mercy to sinners. They excluded every thing in man, from having any, *the remotest* share in the matter of his justification, or reconciliation to God: Every thing, I say, good as well as bad; grace after the implantation of it, as well as enmity before. They considered justification and acceptance with God, not as any real change in the sinner, but a change *wholly relative*. “ To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the *ungodly*, his faith is *counted* for righteousness.”

FAITH is, in the nature of things, necessary to an experience and enjoyment of the benefit, as well as by express divine appointment. But faith does not create the benefit; or change the divine purpose; or make any alteration in the previous certainty of any thing in the universe: As my hearing any piece of news from afar, well attested, and believing it, makes no alteration as to the fact, which is the object of my belief.

SUPPOSE, my kinsman in Judea died ten years ago, and left me all his large estate, by will, well authenticated. I never heard of his death or good will to me, until two years ago, and then I did not believe it. The evidence I then had did not command my assent. Ten days ago, the intelligence came with such demonstration and weight

of evidence, that I could not help believing it, and was much affected with the wonderful love and rich kindness of my good kinsman. For I knew I had always been a most injurious, ungrateful wretch to him; and had always dishonored him as much as was in my power; and would have killed him, many a time, had I been able. I was certain that he knew all this. Which, by the way, was the grand reason why I could not before believe the good news, on former reports; and continued to wander about starving, in rags, beggary and shame. But the evidence, at last, was attended with such light of truth, and the power of demonstration, that it commanded my entire belief.

I now enjoy the comfort of a rich inheritance, and my whole soul is much moved with the kindness of my abused kinsman. I think of him and all his goodness, and of myself, and all my horrid wickedness, very differently from what I did in the days of my vile enmity and malice against my best friend; and it affects all my conduct. Yet the inheritance was as surely mine two, or ten years ago, or even at the moment of my kinsman's death, as it is now, or ever will be.

BEFORE I believed this news, I was *condemned*, or *damm'd* to beggary and infamy, and should have been so all my days, had I not heard and believed it; but now I am rich, and abound in all things, through my *bless'd*, good benefactor, and in full opposition to all my deserts. I have no heart, *now*, to

feel towards him, or speak of him as I once did. So "the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to *all men*; teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; *looking for that blessed hope*, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus ii.

THE apostles every where preached, *as pure gospel*, God wholly reconciled, *but sinners not*. Rom. v. 2. Cor. v. Coloff. i. Heb. ii. 17. In preaching the *pure gospel*, they always affirmed, that God hath nothing, *nothing at all*, against any sinner, in the world, to effect his *final condemnation*; that all he ever had against them, was fully satisfied by their surety; that he had borne all their sins, in his own body on the tree; that "he was bruised for their iniquities, and wounded for their transgressions; that the chastisement of their peace was upon him, and that by his stripes they are healed;" "that Messiah was cut off; but not for himself." Many a glorious hour they sounded the gospel in this very strain; but then, as a proper introduction of it as a message of grace to the hearts of men, they always seasoned it with the fiery and dreadful law. Yet this was no part of the gospel; but quite the counterpart.

Thus, the preaching of all the prophets,

that of Christ and all the apostles, was mixed preaching. The law and gospel were carried along together, though distinct, and even opposite in their natures. Thus all skilful preachers do, in these days, and will to the end of the world. The propriety of it is very great, for the reason I have mentioned. Yea, I say further, that the same thing will be kept in view in heaven to all eternity; the law and the gospel, both in full life and vigor, on the minds of all the redeemed of mankind. This will be necessary to keep up their emotions of gratitude, and their warmest sense of the infinite obligations they are under to their God and their Redeemer. They will often name their Redeemer in their anthems and hallelujahs; but cannot call him by that name, without calling to mind what they once were, and what they were redeemed from. Their song will be in this divine strain, "Thou art worthy; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Rev. v. 9.

SAINTS in heaven, to all eternity, will feel themselves *in themselves*, as worthy of damnation, as the devils in hell. They will know that they themselves have made no amends to justice, *because infinite power and grace hath made them holy*. They will see, and feel, that *separate from their head*, the lowest hell is their just due: They will see and feel this, *deep in their souls* forever more; and *in this sense* "the smoke of their torment will ascend up forever and ever." And

this view of the damned, *in the glass of justice*, will give them the keenest relish of grace, *free grace, mere mercy, sovereign mercy*, and forever animate the body of Christ, with raptures of love unutterable.

THE apostles, in what they preached as *gospel, good news, glad tidings*, to all people; never made any the least distinction between the certain salvation of one sinner and another. They, every where, *mixed in the law*; and *this* again made no distinction: For every word of it damned the preacher, and all his hearers. It condemned every thing short of absolute perfection. With one just and awful voice, it always damned all *human nature*; and even the human nature of the Son of God, in a way of suretyship, or imputation. "He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

BUT, the apostles always made a great and clear distinction, between one sinner and another, as to present privileges and enjoyment, and also with regard to the degree of future blessedness. The penitent, believing sinner, they declared justified, pardoned, entitled to eternal life, and a blessed degree of comfort, *even now*. The impenitent sinner, and the unbeliever, they pronounced *unpardoned*, unjustified, condemned already; and affirmed that the wrath of God did abide on him.

THEY every where asserted, that early piety, and eminent holiness in this life, would have a great advantage over a long life of

fin, or later piety, or less holiness and usefulness : Not only in regard to peace and tranquility, comfort and delight of soul, in this world ; but even with respect to the weight of glory in the world to come. Yet, they always, *as gospel*, affirmed the final salvation of all mankind alike. Paul, and his brethren were indeed very earnest on this head ; and ready to labor this point effectually ; and to suffer any reproach they might meet with, on the account of this glorious doctrine. 1. Tim. iv. 10. “ For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the *Savior of all men, specially* of those that believe ; these things command and teach ;” i. e. build on this principle, with such degree of explanation as the divine spirit may direct, at the present period of time : It being the will of God that light shall yet increase. The difference beforementioned, is very *special*, very great indeed, between those who now believe, and repent, and obey the gospel, and delight their souls in all the consolations of it : And those who are now in unbelief under the damnable power of impenitence, and every hateful lust. Christ is the Savior of the *former specially*, but, *if Paul is not mistaken*, he is the SAVIOR OF ALL MEN, at last.

THE interspersion of the law with the gospel, is exceedingly manifest, through the whole word of God. This consideration is necessary, to vindicate the holy scriptures against the charge of contradiction. There

is no other possible way to do this; neither is their need of any other way. It is so common every where, that it is scarcely expedient to single out any passages in particular. I will refer, however, to one or two, as a general specimen. *Isai. xliii. 21, &c.* "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt-offerings, neither hast thou honored me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with increase. Thou hast brought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices; but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities: I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions FOR MINE OWN SAKE, and will not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou that thou mayest be justified." See also, *Isai. lvii. 13. to the end. Isai. lxiii. throughout.*

INDEED, all the prophets abundantly use this method of keeping law and gospel in view; and would be guilty of the grossest contradictions in the world, upon any other supposition. The apostles do the like. The same well connected scheme runs on to the final judgment, with an aspect to endless eternity. For, when judgment is closed, and the mystery of God, in this world fin-

ished, this same thought extends into eternity, and, as I said before, shall forever be kept in full view. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. xxv. i. e. The voice of law and justice is *everlasting punishment* to sinful men, considered in their *personal character*; but in the *righteous character* of their atoning Sponsor, the gospel proclaims life eternal. Two different characters are the very things here in view. And this is not at all uncommon in laws and rules, divine and human. The character is often named, and the person omitted, though some person always stands connected with the character, and is understood in that connection.

MANKIND, in the passage just quoted, are considered in *two characters*: In their own *personally*; and then the voice of the righteous law is, "these shall go away into everlasting punishment:" And, in *Christ, the righteous*, by union of faith, (and all shall certainly have this before the judgment day, as will appear in its proper place,) and, in this character, the gospel speaks, and the law also, as satisfied in the atonement: "But the righteous into life eternal." The *person* is designated by the *character*, which is frequent in the common language of mankind, as when we say, *the ruler, the judge, the subject, the king, the creditor, the debtor, &c.* some person is always understood, to whom the character applies.

I know that a character cannot suffer

pain, or enjoy happiness, separate from the person; and an objector may here say, "this destroys the force of the argument." But I think it does not at all: For the person designated by the character, can enjoy, or suffer. All mankind will sustain both of these *characters*, at the day of judgment; *that* of the wicked *in themselves personally*; and *that of the righteous*, in the Son of God, by union and imputation.

THE objector may say, "this doctrine as much proves that all shall go to hell, as that all shall go to heaven; or, that all shall go away into everlasting punishment, and also into life eternal, which is impossible; for the person can go but one way." It is true, the person can go but one way, and the person only can suffer, or enjoy; but the wicked *character* is capable of remaining an everlasting object of wrath, shame, contempt, and damnation, or condemnation, and will so, in the view of God, and all holy intelligencies. The righteous character will remain an eternal object of approbation, worthy of life eternal.

BUT which way shall the persons of mankind go? They are designated both ways, and opposite ways, by their opposite characters, and they can go but one, and they are all, you say, to go together; by the voice of the law and justice to hell; by the voice of redeeming love in Christ, to heaven. Which way shall they all go? Which shall get the victory? The sentence of personal justice; or the declaration of grace through

the atonement? Which voice, or sentence shall triumph? Which shall reign? It is a weighty, all important question; the man of inspiration shall decide it. "But where sin abounded grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might GRACE REIGN THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS TO ETERNAL LIFE, BY JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD." Rom. v. 20, 21.

WHOEVER will, with a mind entirely unbiassed, read the whole chapter with due attention, will see this grand point fairly stated, fully discussed, and as fairly decided, as the power of language can express. There the first and second Adam, each a fœderal head to *all men*, are set in full contrast: Justice and grace, the law and gospel, death and life, condemnation and justification, obedience and disobedience. The *approved term* has all along a "*much more*" affixed to it; and every where triumphs over its *opposite*. Christ and the gospel, grace and life, justification and obedience, every where abound, reign, and triumph, over all the rebellion and guilt of the first Adam, and that of all his race, even, in the deepest colors, most awful malignity, and *widest extent* of it.

AND the general tenor of divine revelation, bears this uniform aspect; exhibiting and ascertaining the universal victory of the seed of the woman, over that of the serpent. "As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." "Look unto me and be ye saved, *all*

the ends of the earth ; for I am God and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return ; that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength ; even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed." Isai. xlv. 22, &c. " Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow ; of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 8, &c.

WHENEVER the apostles preached to a mixed multitude, as they often did, they commanded them by divine authority to believe, every one the self same truth. And it was the duty of every one to believe the same, and a great sin for any one not to believe. The warrant of faith was the same to all ; the *object*, the *foundation* the same, as presented to all. They, who believed, rested on sure salvation ; yet their faith made nothing true that was not true before, as to the foundation on which their whole dependance rested. Had they not believed, at that time, " nevertheless the foundation of God would have stood equally sure, and

with the same seal." "And what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith (*faithfulness*) of God without effect? God forbid: yea let God be true and every man a liar." Rom. iii. 3, &c.

Now reader, turn to the bible and read that chapter to the end. You will see the salvation of all the human kind alike secured, in the firm decree, and sovereign love of God, and in the atonement, power, and faithfulness of his Son; and all distinctions among men removed out of the way, as fully as words can possibly express. The preaching is mixed, as usual; the law, in all its infinite purity and amazing terror, condemning all mankind *alike*; and the gospel, in all its triumphant glory with the same aspect of *sure salvation* to every child of Adam. This idea being every where attended to by the inspired writers, viz. that faith alone gives every poor, apostate sinner, sense, enjoyment, and final assurance of salvation, in his own soul. The law is established, and the gospel triumphant in the final redemption of human nature.

It is manifest enough, that all could not take the benefit, in case they did believe, unless there was a previous, sure foundation, alike for every one. No one lays the foundation by his faith; but all build upon it. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Faith, agreeably to every just idea we can form of it, never had, never can have, any other province than this; to give us sense

and enjoyment of an unalterable fact or object, if comfortable; or distress, if the reverse. Opposite objects are equally the objects of our belief. Two men are destined to certain death, by an enraged band of furious assassins, in close pursuit. The *one* can see and hear well, and knows he must die immediately, and is in awful terror; the *other* is totally blind and deaf. Is not the death of the latter as surely impending as that of his fellow? The *one* hath *sense*, the *other* not; but the dreadful decree is alike sure to both.

I PROCEED NOW to consider the decrees of God, or doctrine of election, according to reason and divine revelation. It manifestly standeth thus.

THERE was a period in eternal duration, which God inhabits, or filleth up, (as in scripture phrase he is said to inhabit eternity) in which there was no existence but God only, and when deity had in full view all possible existence. Out of which infinite comprehension, or view of all things, he might create what he pleased. He saw what was best to be brought into actual existence, and what not; or what would form the wisest, best, most perfect, and most benevolent system of creation. This his wisdom and goodness moved him to determine to bring into actual existence, in the fittest time and manner. On this choice, his knowledge of all actual, future existence was founded, according to our best manner of

conception. He determined what should be, when he might as well have determined otherwise, if he had seen it best ; and, in that case, would have otherwise decreed. Then the system would have been different from what it now is, or ever will be ; also, he would have foreknown it as a different system. But, seeing as he did, with infinite wisdom and goodness, what would be best, he eternally determined what should, in due time, take place in the scale of existence.

ON this, according to all the rational conceptions of man, was founded his certain foreknowledge of all real, future being, or existence, in the universal system ; I say his foreknowledge of *every thing*, without the least exception, from the greatest world and highest creature that ever he did, or will create, to the very least and lowest ; from the highest angel to the minutest reptile or insect ; and from the greatest world to the least particle or atom of dust ; including every thing of a moral nature, every thought, volition or inclination of all moral agents, that should ever come into being ; all their different measures, capacities, powers, talents, motives and dispositions ; and the universal connection and result of the whole, as well as every single and particular operation. In a word, he eternally foreknew all actual, future existence, moral and natural, without a possibility of mistake.

THIS knowledge was founded in his own infinitely wise choice, and unalterable determination or decree : Or, if you please, his

infinitely wise and good election. And every thing moral and natural, every being and mode of being, every circumstance, every connection and consequence throughout the whole scale or system of being, did originally, absolutely depend on the choice, election, decree, or predestination of the eternal, immutable Jehovah. And all things; in actual being, have now the same entire, absolute dependance, and ever will have to all eternity.

I CAN conceive of no God at all, but in the above view. If I recede in the least from this idea, I fall into complete atheism. Divine revelation is plain upon this subject. "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." "He is of one mind and who can change him? and what his soul desireth that he doth." "Of whom took he counsel?" "He doeth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" I might recite a thousand sentences full to the same purpose; but it is needless. Read the whole book of Job, and you will see every argument there founded on the doctrine of the divine determinations, and the infustrable accomplishment of them all; and the infinite fitness it should be so. Indeed there can be nothing more conspicuous every where, through the whole bible. And in the reasonings of man, there can be no step between this idea of God, and atheism.

I HAVE said, that God's predestination, foreknowledge, election, choice, decrees, (or whatever name by which you indicate the same thought) are alike concerned with all existence, and all modes of existence, both natural and moral, to all extent of space, and to all endless duration. This is indeed true, and thus far gives us a becoming view of God. But I am now to apply this grand truth to the concerns of our salvation alone, according to the plain word of God. *Therein* the doctrine of God's fixed election, or choice; his determinate counsel and foreknowledge; his sure, unfailing predestination; his purposes in himself before creation began, are expressed as plainly as any thing can be expressed, and exactly agreeable to all our rational ideas of a Supreme Being.

IN divine revelation, we find the election, decree, predestination, or appointment of God, with respect to several objects; but in every case alike fixed and certain. It may suffice to consider the doctrine only in four respects; from whence we may easily make application to every other case. In regard, *First*; To particular men. *Secondly*; To some particular events. *Thirdly*; To particular communities of men. *Fourthly*; To the eternal salvation of men.

IN *God's revealed will*, his election, or predestination hath sometimes special regard to some particular men, in distinction from others; and is always sovereign, and becoming God, who never can foresee any distinctions among creatures, but what, from

all eternity, he was determined himself to make.

Thus, he elected Abraham to be a favorite of his, the father of his covenant people, rather than Nahor. Thus, for wise and holy ends, he chose that Pharaoh should be an example of great obstinacy, rather than Moses. Rom. ix. Thus he elected Jacob to many blessings rather than Esau; David, rather than Shimei, or Saul; Cyrus, rather than Nebuchadnezzar; Paul to know and enjoy the consolations of the gospel, in early life, and, for a happy season in this world, rather than Pilate. It is needless to multiply particular instances. In a word; it is founded on God's election, choice, or predestination, that any man in the world, is, *in this life*, in circumstances more eligible than his neighbor, or any other man. All these things are wholly of God, and of his eternal purpose, however they may be effected by the instrumentality, or different conduct of moral agents: For even all their different conduct, and every different inclination in the universe, has an equal and absolute dependance on the eternal, fixed purpose and plan that was unalterable, in the mind of Jehovah, before creation began. This may serve as a specimen of what is intended by election, or the choice of God, as to all distinctions among men in this world.

With regard to God's eternal election, or choice relative to all events that take place in time, predestination is of the same general consideration.

Thus, it was predestinated that the deliverance of Israel, and the overthrow of their enemies, should be at the time, and in the manner it was at the red sea, rather than at a different time, and in another manner: That the deliverance of God's people from their captivity in Babylon, should be in all circumstances as it was, when it might have been effected with a thousand different circumstances, had Jehovah seen fit, and so determined. There was the choice and election of God in all this. *Isai.* xlv. and xlvi. So with regard to the crucifixion of Christ, the time, manner, and whole instrumentality, was eternally fixed, in the divine purpose. *Acts* ii. 23. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." It is just so with all events, from the greatest to the least, and all distinctions among them.

The same reasoning applies with regard to all communities of mankind in the world, and all their distinctions. The eternal choice or election of God, before there was any creature, established the future certainty of all these things; and thereupon was God's foreknowledge of all these *then* future events founded.

Thus the Jews were elected to enjoy the special privileges of divine revelation, for a long season, in distinction from all their fellow-men beside. Also, a few among them were elected to know and enjoy inward saving consolation, in this world; in distinc-

tion from the great majority of that nation. So the Greeks and Romans, in ancient times, were elected to enjoy the many blessings of civilization, learning, and extensive empire, in distinction from the ignorant and barbarous nations of the world. Thus also, many particular persons of those learned and polite nations, were predestinated to special acquirements and blessings of knowledge and usefulness, in distinction from the body of those nations. Innumerable instances of the like kind, in a greater or less degree, have been found among men, and bodies or communities of men, wherein the eternal predestination of God, has, in due time, appeared.

NOT only all particular persons that are wise and virtuous, holy and good, in this life; but also all churches or holy communities, that, *as such*, sustain the character now mentioned, enjoy also, all the privileges and comforts connected with such a character, *in this life*, in consequence of the eternal election, or free, sovereign choice of God. And they are, in this proper and very important sense, *the elect*; in contradistinction from those that yet live in blindness, and are tormented by the cruel power of un sanctified nature, and distressed in the awful slavery of sin. They likewise, *as holy, virtuous and useful communities*, are elected to a superior and distinguished reward of grace in the world to come.

IN this view, they stand distinguished from those that yet live in ignorance of God,

and falvation, and without usefulness in the world; those that are yet haters of God, and opposed to the highest good of his creatures. From all such, I say, those who now know God, love and serve him, and serve their generation by his will, are greatly distinguished, by the election of God. This is abundantly taken notice of in the word of God; for a specimen, read Ephes. i.

WHENEVER election, or predestination, in sacred scripture, *doth distinguish one person, or one community, or description of persons, from another*, it never hath the least regard to any thing *beyond the grave*; excepting a difference in degree of felicity.

IN the last place, the doctrine of predestination hath, in the sacred oracles, great and frequent respect to our everlasting salvation after death.

IT is a mistaken apprehension, in some, that *election, decree, predestination, &c.* necessarily implies distinction between some and others of mankind. The words do not *necessarily*, or even *naturally*, imply any such thing. It may, or may not be included in the idea, or signified by any of those terms, with equal propriety. This distinction is signified, as I have shewn, as to advantages and disadvantages in this world, and degrees of happiness in the world to come. But, the words, *decree, predestination, election, and the like*, might be used with equal propriety, were there never any distinction at all to be made between one man and another, either in this world or that to come. All words

of this import, only signify a firm and fixed purpose; an immutable determination of God; an establishment irreverfible; an unalterable plan of conduct, laying out what fhall take place and what not.

IF God had *chosen, decreed, or predestinated* that never any evil fhould exift, either moral or natural; the whole plan would have flood upon God's election, predestination, or decree, as much as it does now. It is therefore wholly a miftake, to fuppofe the words carry in them naturally any idea of diftinction. If all the other planets in the folar fyftem, are full of rational inhabitants, as is very probable, and if they are all holy and happy, which may be the cafe; yet their condition is founded on the eternal choice, decree, and predestination of the Creator as much as ours. The eternal plan, whatever it be, whether more fimple or mixed, is alike built on God's election, decree or predestination. On any fuppofition, it is juft what God determined it fhould be, in every relation and circumftance.

To know what the decrees of God are, or what his election, choice, or predestination is, in regard to mankind after this life, we muft confult what he hath told us, and abide only by what he hath revealed to us in his word. I have before faid, that there is not one thought of diftinction between one man and another, intimated to us in the whole bible, with regard to their *certain falvation*, in the life to come; though, as to the *differ-*

ent degree of happiness, the distinction is manifest.

THE divine will, purpose, election, decree, predestination, or by whatever term you would signify the eternal, immutable plan of Jehovah, does, every where in his word, *fully secure the certain happiness of ALL the human race, after death.* This assertion is bold, the reader may say ; I therefore now appeal to God's own word for the truth of it.

THE words, *decree, predestination, purpose, and election* (which, the learned will bear me witness, are terms promiscuously used in translating the same original *hebrew and greek*) with their derivatives, are brought to our view one hundred and twenty four times, in the old and new testament. They mostly refer to things of a temporal kind ; and in this sense, a distinction between one man, or one body of men and another is generally clear enough. Some are elected to privileges and enjoyments, in this world, either civil or religious, and others omitted. This is frequent, as to temporal matters, or enjoyments during this life, or any period of time pointed out. Of this description is the case of Esau and Jacob ; in which nothing at all is included but what is of a temporal nature with regard to them and their posterity : Also, that of Abraham and his seed ; in which nothing after death is made peculiar to them, only, as Abraham and his seed were typical of Christ and the church universal. In this view, all mankind share alike in the election of that pa-

triarch, and that people, as will soon appear. So in the election of Cyrus, for great purposes in this world; and almost every where in the sacred oracles, these terms denote only what was to begin and end in a certain period of time. And, it is always so, when any distinction is made between one man, or one description of men and another, excepting the decrees of future happiness.

WE now further attend to the divine purpose, or election, only as it respects the eternal salvation of mankind, after this life. Here, every reader, that hath that rare attainment of reading and thinking wholly without previous bias of mind, will see there is no distinction at all, as to the *certain salvation* of the human kind. In this view, God has *one elect head* and no more; and *one elect body* and no more. The *elect head* is BEN-ADAM, the *Son of man*, in equal connection with all human nature. The *elect body* is all human nature.

THE forgetful reader may here cry out, where then is the distinction which election implies? But have I not sufficiently shewn, that the term implies no such thing necessarily, or even naturally. There may be a distinction, or there may not, consistent with the natural meaning of this word, or any other word of like meaning, as predestination, purpose, decree, determinate counsel, &c. All these phrases import a certain, fixed, unalterable plan of Deity; whether that

plan contains many distinctions, or none at all. The reader will pardon this sudden repetition, as the idea is of essential importance.

I now say again, that election, or predestination, as it respects mankind, after death, centres in one head, CHRIST *the Son of God, the Son of man, the only mediator* between God and man; and *all human kind, as his kindred body*. This head is in a like *natural* and *federal* connection with the whole body of human nature. Hence we find the Messiah never calling himself the *Son of Abraham*, or the *Son of David*, (though others might sometimes call him so) but *Ben-Adam the Son of man*. We find some of the prophets frequently so called of God, as types of Christ. The mediator, in his person and in his types, is pointed out by this epithet, about one hundred and fifty times, in the prophets and in the new testament; and almost every time he speaks of himself, he uses this term. I do not recollect that he ever called himself the Son of Abraham, or of Noah, or the Son of David, or of any man that ever was, except the first Adam.

The reader will remember, as I have intimated, (and the learned all know it well) that the Son of man is in the hebrew, literally *the Son of Adam*, and the meaning the same in the original greek. This is the phrase our Savior generally useth, when speaking of himself; and manifestly for no other reason, than to keep in our view his relation to, and connection with *human na-*

ture, in the universal extent of it, without any distinction, or any more connection with one man, or one description of men, than with another.

It is true, he is pointed out sometimes by the prophets, as the seed of Abraham; the branch of Jesse; the son of David, &c. But these descriptions of him are only to direct the church or people of God, and all that waited for the Messiah, how to know when the true Messiah did indeed come. And the tribe of Judah, and town of Bethlehem are mentioned for the same end, with many other descriptions, that we may know the true Messiah, and be guarded against all impostors. But Christ, in his human nature, never had any more intimate connection with Abraham, Judah, or David, in contradistinction from human nature in general, than he had with Judea, or Bethlehem, in contradistinction from any other country, or town in the world. We know he had none with those places, that made him a peculiar Savior to them, in distinction from other parts of the world; though he was born in that country, and in that town.

INDEED, human nature is identically one now, just as much as it was, when all were in Adam. Eve was of him, and all human nature is so. The shooting out of many branches, does not, in the least, alter the nature of the tree. We have had no intermarriages with any other species to divide or alienate the blood. All human flesh is called "*thv own flesh.*" All human blood is one blood.

“ God hath made of *one blood* all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth.” Hence, with me, there is no doubt, that the *second man, the Lord from heaven* hath chosen this epithet, when speaking of himself so many times, both typically and personally, to impress on our minds a sense of his common, equal union and connection with all human nature, as our *Goel*, or kinsman Redeemer.

Now, I say this Son of man is God's only object, as an elect head in regard to our eternal salvation ; and all human nature is his *one entire elect object*, in union with Christ, as a body with a head. The Savior expressly says “ he came to seek and to save, not some of those that were lost ; but” *that which was lost, that humanity ; that nature ; that complex body ;* which he so often by the spirit of inspiration calls *the world ; the whole world ; all men ; all nations ; all people.* “ Glad tidings of great joy shall be unto *all people.*” But I may speak more of the elect body, after I have further attended to the elect head. The second man, or the Son of man is often called *God's elect, or chosen*, by way of emphasis ; and the fountain of life to all men ; and a substitute, or surety in the place of a whole fallen world ; or covenant head of all human nature.

No believer, I think, ever will doubt but that the Son of man, the Savior of the world is spoken of, under the type of David. Psal. Lxxxix. 1,—37. There we find him God's elect, or chosen, connected with all the world, by way of command and subjugation.

This all allow, *in Christ*, denotes spiritual conquest and victory. There we find God has entered into covenant with him, as one he has chosen out of the people. The Father speaks to him as Son of man; and speaks to him some things peculiar to the divine nature, and many things to him as mediator and redeemer. Particularly, that the heavens shall praise his wonders; that none in heaven or among the sons of the mighty can be compared with him; that the heavens are his, the earth also and the fulness of it; that the people are blessed, who become acquainted with him, or know the joyful sound of his grace and love. God gives him full dominion to the utmost extent of the earth; to every sea and every river; and makes every mountain to rejoice in his strength, i. e. the power of his salvation; attributes to him a redeeming power, equal and extensive as his creative power. Here is God's elect head of mankind, God's chosen, and here is described the extent of his dominion in the world. In the second psalm, he is set up with like elective appointment, and extensive dominion; with power to break and dash effectually, until all bow to him, from the loftiest king, to the most obscure peasant in the uttermost parts of the earth.

In the lxxii. psalm it is declared that his saving power shall be extended over the whole earth. All nations, the greater with the less, it is said, shall partake of his peace and righteousness, and bring forth the fruit of the same. "The mountains shall bring

peace to the people and the little hills by righteousness." "They shall fear him, as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations." "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth;" including the most barbarous and obscure inhabitants of the world. "They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; all shall be subdued to him," "his enemies shall lick the dust." All rulers and potentates; all distant princes shall bring him tributes of praise and obedience. "His name shall endure forever, be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him; *all nations* shall call him blessed." It is declared that from a very small beginning, like the confined discoveries of redeeming love, then among the Jews, its blessings should be, in due time, extended as the grass of the earth, and the fruit be copious and astonishing. In metaphor thus expressed, "there shall be an handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city (i. e. the city or people of God, extended all over the world) shall flourish as the grass of the earth." Read the whole Psalm and view the elect head and elect body.

I KNOW, that in all declarations of God's eternal decree, the idea of distinction and limitation among the elect body, is kept up: Some shall sooner become acquainted with these things, and some later: Some in a higher, and some in a lower degree: Some

more happily affected than others, and bring forth more fruits of holiness, and enjoy more consolation in consequence thereof. But all these distinctions and limitations are confined to the present world; none reach beyond.

THE Son of man saith, "all that the Father hath given me shall come unto me, &c." The question is, how many? The answer is "He shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." i. e. To be in due time subdued and conquered, by the king anointed on the holy hill of Zion; and made to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling, and to kiss the Son. Here also, the idea of the holy and dreadful wrath of God is displayed, and the voice of justice announcing terrible destruction.

I wish the reader cautiously to keep in mind what I have observed before, that the whole of divine revelation is every where mixed from beginning to end, law and gospel side by side; the voice of justice and that of grace; and that the latter, by the sure decree of heaven, and by the merit and power of the Son of God, is to get the final victory. "Grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

THIS elect head is fully equal to his great work of saving all men, taking away the sins of the world. As he died, not only for our sins, who are now distinguished from others by an early sense of his grace, and early manifestations of his fulness; but al-

fo for the fins of the whole world. He can and will extend, in due time, his all efficacious offices, and exertions of prophet and king, co-extensive with his work as a priest. He will seek and save that *lost thing*. The utmost perverseness of human nature will be overcome, until "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." This elect head of human nature "shall stand for an ensign of the people, to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious;" read Isai. xi.

AGAIN, the elect of God in whom his soul delighteth, shall manifest to all nations the judgment of the law, or justice of God, wholly satisfied in him. All, that his obedience unto death hath merited, his power and faithfulness will apply to the human kind, in the most distant times and regions. In spite of all opposition he will not fail nor be discouraged, until the most distant islands in the world have bowed to the all commanding power of his grace, the almighty energy of his spirit; so that they shall sing to the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth. The wilderness and the cities thereof shall lift up their voice; the inhabitants of the rock shall sing, and they shall shout from the top of the mountains. Read Isai. xlii. from the beginning to the 16th verse.

THIS glorious head and the elect body are *one*, in the predestination of God. "I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, (i. e. Christ) and out of Judah an inheritor of my moun-

tains, and mine elect (that is, the body of Christ) shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there." Isaï. lxxv. 9. "For thus saith the Lord I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the gentiles like a flowing stream," it is again said in the prophet "as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." "The Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord and his name one:" i. e. All people shall be united in his character. We might compile a volume of citations from the prophets, all of the same tenor, as *pure gospel*; and, at the same time see many limitations and distinctions among mankind, of a *present* different character, and the voice of justice every where intermixed, and crying aloud for vengeance; but the voice of grace and the blood of Christ speaking better things. "Lo the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root and offspring of David hath prevailed."

I COULD wish that every reader might attend to Paul's discourse on the doctrine of election, especially in the ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters of his epistle to the Romans. There we find an eternal, fixed plan of Deity, insuring the final salvation of all the *literal*, or *natural* seed of Abraham, all the Jews. Yet, in the course of this life, in the course of time, and God's dispensations *on earth*, with that nation, the apostle takes notice of as great and sovereign dis-

tinctions, as between Jacob and Esau, in temporal matters; and makes the latter an emblem to illustrate the former.

HE bewails, from his own former bitter experience, hardness of heart, and enmity against Christ; the miserable case of that nation as a body. They wished themselves at the greatest distance from Christ and all his offered grace, as he once did, or could do, in his blindness and enmity. He could sympathize with them, and greatly pity them, from his own experience. He saw but a very few of them reconciled to their Messiah, or in the knowledge and enjoyment of the benefit; only a remnant possessing the knowledge, sense, and comfort of salvation.

MANY more gentiles had come to the knowledge and comfort of eternal salvation than of the Jews; though they were very zealous, and followed after righteousness in their own blind way. They rejected an all-sufficient atonement, and eternal life, on the same footing that any publican might have it, or any poor, scandalous, filthy *dog* of the gentile world. For they gave other nations no better epithet. They did not at all understand how, *in Christ* (the only character that God hath the least respect unto, in the final salvation of all men, or *any* man) every valley was filled, and every mountain and hill made low, and all crooked things straight, and all rough things plain, and the Lord alone exalted: How all boasting was cut off, and God would stain the pride of all glory. These things they did

not understand ; therefore they sought salvation by ways of distinction, or as it is expressed by the works of the law." They supposed that they must, some how, be marked different from other men ; before, any thing God had ever done, would be a *sure foundation* and a *sole foundation* of their hope.

THE apostle tells them that this was a most miserable state of mind to be in, and a most comfortless condition ; that they were awfully blind, as to all present knowledge, love, and service of God, or consolation ; and that the present temper of their hearts involved in it wickedness, *injustice*, demanding eternal damnation, in their own persons. He labors with the utmost concern, to bring them to know better, to enjoy the comfort of hope, and to love and serve God in consequence of it. Yet he fully asserts that God had *secured*, and, in his own time, would certainly *effect* the final salvation of every Jew that ever had existence. He declares that although their blindness was so awful at present ; yet it should not finally prevent their salvation.

AFTER all he says against their most abominable obstinacy, and the doleful effects of it, *in this world* ; he asserts that the final salvation of his whole kindred nation, stood on a foundation very different from any thing *in them*, or *in any creature*. " And so all Israel shall be saved : As it is written, there shall come out of Zion a deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob :

For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes;” i. e. they are left in awful blindness, *for the present*, and will be for a season, that the gospel may have a greater spread among you Gentiles, “but, as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.” i. e. Their salvation is secured in the elect body of Christ, together *with*, and *as fully as that* of their fathers, the patriarchs and prophets, who walked ever so humbly and uprightly before God, and enjoyed great consolation: “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” Rom. xi. 25.

God never rested one atom of his eternal plan and fixed purpose, on any creature, or any thing that should ever, at any particular time, be found in creatures. They all rather subserve the accomplishment of it, Indeed, they can by no means frustrate “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,” in any one instance.

God cuts off all mankind, *wholly, in every view*, but in his *own Son*, Jews and Gentiles alike, and there is not the least difference. He concludes, or shuts all mankind up together, in total wickedness and unbelief; and even in that very predicament, ascertains their salvation, and that of all alike. “For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.” Rom. xi. 32. This is most astonishing; but, I wish men would not cavil about it, and quarrel with it as they do. Let them

rather feel in their hearts, towards the great God and his sovereign will, wisdom, and grace, as Paul did; and say, with him; "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments (i. e. decrees) and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: To whom be glory forever, Amen. I wish the reader carefully to attend to the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, in particular, although all the writings of Paul, and the whole sacred scripture centre in the same great point; *Christ, and the salvation of his mystic body.*

IN a word; the doctrine of God's election, or eternal, fixed choice, decrees, predestination, by what name soever you are pleased to call it, as it respects his grace to the human kind in this world, and their salvation in the world to come, stands exactly thus, in all the reason we are capable of, and in all the sacred oracles. All is fixed and immutable, in the mind of Jehovah, from eternity to eternity; involving innumerable distinctions among men, communities, and nations of men; and, as many in regard to privileges, light, comfort, influence and effect, *in the present world*; and great, and innumerable distinctions and differences in the life and *world to come*, in regard to *different degrees* of happiness, dignity, and glory. Yet the divine purpose alike secures all men *in Christ alone*; in his union with, and covenant for human nature,

as a covenant for the people, and Gods salvation to the ends of the earth ; and by the exertion of his office of priest, prophet, and king, in equal extent with each other. In this way, I say, alike secures every part of human nature, from any pain or sorrow in the world to come : And alike secures real happiness and glory to every one, in that proportion of grace, which infinite wisdom and goodness hath appointed.

WE now look into the atonement, the source of all hope to guilty man. Some have, in late years, imbibed a sentiment concerning the atonement, exceedingly different from that of the prophets and apostles, that of the primitive fathers in the christian church, or that of our christian fathers in later times, such as *Luther, Calvin, Owen, Flavel, Watts, Hooker, Edwards*, and indeed every man in Europe and America, that has past under the denomination of a calvinist, since the reformation.

THEIR idea is, that the atonement is nothing of a vicarious nature. They admit nothing like a substitute ; nothing like a legal transfer of guilt and righteousness, by divine constitution and appointment ; nothing like a bondsman paying for an original debtor ; nothing like a redeemer, under the Jewish law, stepping into the place of his kinsman, and redeeming by price his forfeited inheritance ; nothing like a good character presented and accepted, *in law*, in the room and stead of a bad one,

&c. &c. But these have been uniformly, the sentiments of those I before mentioned, since the christian æra; and the uniform sense of the Jewish church, with respect to the great atonement pointed out by all the sacrifices, substitutes, propitiations, and atonements of that œconomy; and have ever been the invariable sentiments of all nations of the earth, so far as they have made use of propitiations and atonements.

THOSE ideas, and indeed, the idea of any proper atonement, or legal transfer of guilt and righteousness, is now wholly discarded by some. They have, to the great astonishment of many, boldly asserted that all the oblations and sacrifices of the ancient church, had no direct meaning in them; but that they are a vague and indefinite kind of premonition, that a Messiah should, in due time, suffer, not however, as an *oblation, vicar, or substitute*, for any man. Hence according to them, he did not bear any man's sins in his own body on the tree, in any direct and proper sense; was not wounded for our transgressions, or bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace, was not upon him, nor are we healed by his stripes: Only as in a mere metaphorical, indirect, and improper sense.

HAVING denied the transfer, and every thing of the nature of a direct and proper imputation, they explain the whole import of Christ's obedience unto death, in the following manner. "That God being in his free sovereign goodness, determined to save

sinners, of his own mere mercy, was yet equally determined to vindicate his law, and give the highest possible testimony of his everlasting approbation of it, to all intelligent creatures. Therefore, with the free consent of his own Son, brought him under this same law, in human nature, and then exacted the whole demand of it. Hereby shewing, that God so highly esteemed the law, as to honor it, at the greatest possible expence ; and that he was willing to do nothing, but as he would be done by. But in the like predicament, he was willing his Son should suffer just as his law demands of man : And having given this greatest demonstration of the infinite excellency of his law, he now pardons and saves whom he pleases, of his own sovereign grace and mere mercy." This they call the atonement ; though in full opposition to all propriety of language, as will fully appear.

THEY have no idea of setting this atonement to the account of man ; or laying the iniquities of men on Christ, by any legal transfer, or any vicarious covenant of redemption, or any thing like imputations on either side. They only say, that the door is now wide open for God to save sinners, and fully maintain all the honors of justice, and that God now acts, according to the free propensity of his own nature, in this great affair.

THIS doctrine, if true, would, at first sight shew us that the eternal happiness of all sinners is made sure. For what will not

infinite love (GOD IS LOVE) joined with infinite power do, when there remains not the least claim of justice, or any other divine attribute in the way? We may safely abide by what God hath so often, and so clearly told us; that nothing but the claim of justice can stand in the way of our happiness. All his moral attributes are on the side of our happiness, this only excepted. All his natural attributes are ready to carry into effect all that his infinite grace, mercy, and love point out; saving only that the honor of his law, the copy of his infinite holiness and justice, stands in the way.

THAT the moral nature of God is infinite love, is most certain: That this love pleads infinitely for sparing every sinner from eternal death, he hath often said, and confirmed by solemn oath, Ezek. xviii. and through the whole tenor of his word. Now what can any desire more, to insure their own salvation, than the declaration and oath of God, that his whole disposition is infinitely opposed to the final destruction of any man: being also assured, that every attribute of his nature, may appear infinitely glorious and honorable, in the salvation of all; and that infinite, uncontrollable wisdom and power, are ever ready to accomplish all the divine will?

I THEREFORE say again, that, if the aforementioned, new notion of the atonement were just, the final salvation of all mankind would be as sure, as infinite love and

power can make it; and there would need no more to be said on the subject. But I would not avail myself, at all, of this principle: For it is entirely opposite to all reason, and the whole word of God.

THE TRUE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT is in very deed this. A *direct, true, and proper setting all our guilt to the account of Christ, as our fæderal head and sponsor: And a like placing his obedience unto death, to our account.* In the covenant of redemption and divine constitution, God regards both parties, just as though the Son of man had personally done all, man hath done; and man had done and suffered all that the *second* man hath himself done and suffered. Rom. viii. 3, 4. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." In the atonement, JEHOVAH looked on his Son, in the glass of fæderal stipulation, in the very character of sinful man, and, *for him a true and proper substitute*, and treated him in justice as such; and took complete satisfaction of him, for all sinful man deserved. This being done, he looks on sinful man in the *true and proper character* of his substitute or vicar, even the Son of man, and will be sure to treat him accordingly. The assertion is most astonishing, and far from what man or angels would

ever have thought of, had it not been revealed by God himself. This, agreeably to the divine oracles, is a constant mark of the truth.

HERE some may cry out and say, guilt and righteousness is of a personal nature, and cannot be transferred. But I now promise, that in its proper place, I will fully demonstrate, that although both these are personal, they may be transferred, fully according to reason and common sense, as well as agreeably to the divine constitution. But first, I must adduce my evidences to shew that the scripture doctrine of atonement is exactly as I have stated.

HERE are four english terms, frequent in the bible, which promiscuously convey the same idea, viz. *atonement*, *ransom*, *propitiation*, and *redemption*. The learned will bear me witness, that the same original hebrew and greek words, with all their compounds and derivatives, are promiscuously translated by these english words, with the derivatives and compounds of the same. The substantives are used *seventy two* times in the old and new testament, in the original, and also in the translation. They, every where, either directly import, or fairly allude unto a true and proper transfer, or setting the doings or sufferings of one, to the true and proper account of another; or dealing with one, not in his personal character, but in the personal character of another, *by him assumed*.

I MIGHT fill many ~~folios~~, should I bring up to view distinctly, every passage in scrip-

ture that is to the purpose, and make only a brief comment on each. I shall only adduce a few, and leave the reader to add many more, at his leisure, if he please. The plain import of all the sacrifices and oblations, which God appointed by Moses, first meet our view. Their whole meaning centers in the antitype, which all, that pay any regard to revelation, allow to be Christ. There is no figure no metaphor in a *type*, any more than in the most plain and simple proposition. All types only speak in the most direct manner to the *eye*, what the most simple proposition does to the eye, if read, or to the ear if pronounced. Our mouths speak words; types speak things more directly, and admit no metaphor.

THE term is first used, to give us the true and proper idea of a propitiation, ransom, &c. in Exodus xxi. 30. "If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the RANSOM of his life whatsoever is laid upon him." Here the money mentioned, comes directly and properly into the place of the man's life; one or the other must be laid down. Again Exodus xxx. 12, 16. "And thou shalt take the atonement-money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls." An atonement is called *atonement-money*, the whole idea of which is negotiable, or transferable. In the case of the redemp-

tion of an inheritance that has been alienated, the word is often used to signify a proper price. Levit. xxv. 23, 24, 25. Paul, with the plainest allusion to this chapter, comments upon it, applying it to the redemption by Christ. Ephes. i. 14. "Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." How directly is the victim put in the place of Isaac? See Gen. xxii. No language can possibly speak plainer than the type of the two goats, Levit. xvi. The high priest killed one goat *for the people*; shewing that they all deserved to die, and that the antitype should indeed die *for them*. Then, by a plain signal, with full confession of all their sins, laid them on the head of the scape goat, to be carried away into everlasting oblivion, as to any punishment that should come on them in another world, for their sins; though the very symbol, so often repeated, would keep them in perpetual remembrance, for a proper effect on their own minds.

DAVID applies the direct and proper import of all these types, to redemption by Christ, and makes use of the same words, Psalm xlix. 7, 8. "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever." Solomon understands the same term to mean *one thing directly for another*, Prov. xiii. 8. "The ransom of a man's life are his riches." Read Paul's comment on the

import of all these terms, centering in Christ, Rom. iii. 21. to the end. The apostle here and every where, notices the abundance of grace connected with our justification; and also shews us that there is much more of grace and mercy connected with our justification, by a *true* and *proper imputation*, than could be in any other way, which I shall fully confirm in its proper place.

IN the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, Paul considers the atonement in this view: That Jesus paid the whole price for us, or exhibited his own character to God in the room and stead of ours, when we were in our worst state, without repentance, without faith, in all our enmity, and in every view most unworthy: That he did justify us, not as *penitent*; but as *impenitent*; not as *believers*, but as *unbelievers*; for penitence and faith are exercises of a new heart, and godliness; not as *godly*, in the least degree; but as wholly *ungodly*: And then brings the knowledge and comfort of this previous transaction to our souls, by giving us a *heart prepared* to have light and full evidence operate properly upon; also, communicating to us full evidence of what he hath done, so that we receive a *previous atonement*, and “know the things that are freely given us of God.”

JOHN tells us, if *any man*, any of the human kind sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: that they who *at present* are convinced of this, have *present special comfort* in it; but that

the propitiation and the advocate would surely extend to all, in *due time*. For he declares that this advocate for any man, "is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD." He also declares, that a man must have a good and obedient heart given him, in order to take this comfort. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." 1. John, ii. 1, 2, 3.

JESUS tells us, Matt. xx. 28. and Mark x. 45. what the end of his death was; "to give his life a ransom for *many*." He does not, in these places, tell us *how many*. The word *many*, may comprehend a *part*, or *all* of the human race. In John i. 29. the extent of the ransom is declared. "John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the SIN OF THE WORLD." Paul understands this ransom for many, to signify just as many as there shall ever exist of the human kind, and so calls it "*a ransom for all*." 1. Tim. ii. 6.

THE same apostle speaketh of the exceeding comfort resulting from predestination and adoption, as first communicated to present believers, and equally sure in God's time, to extend to all the children of men. Ephes. i. 4,—14. "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children,

by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one ALL THINGS in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, THE GOSPEL OF YOUR SALVATION: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

THE whole book of divine revelation gives us the same idea of the propitiation, atonement, ransom, redemption; by whatever term is imported our *meritorious* justification, ascertaining our final salvation. *Meritorious*, I say; for never was there a clearer distinction in the word of God, than the three different significations of the term *justification*: 1st. By the atonement *meritoriously*: 2. By faith *instrumentally*, for comfort and enjoyment: 3. By works, *declaratively*, or

as evidence of our justification. If the reader reads as he ought on such a subject, he will certainly have his bible before him : I will therefore only further refer to a few passages, which he may consult and comment upon for himself. John i. 29.—iii. 16, 17.—iv. 42.—vi. 33, 51.—viii. 12.—xii. 47.—xvii. 21, 23. Rom. iv. 13.—xi. 12, 15. 2. Cor. v. 18, to the end, compare Psal. lxxiv. 9, with John xii. 32. Ephes. iii. Titus iv.

IN these last two chapters referred to, the infinite, sovereign, all conquering grace and power of God appear most astonishing. Here the apostle considers the whole preaching of the gospel, and faith wrought in the soul, as having no other concern with their glorious objects ; but only by comfort in them, and personal improvement : Not at all altering God's purpose and grace, or Christ's merits, or his sure determination to apply them to sinners ; but only giving them an apprehension and sensibility of all these things, and so laying a foundation for meet fruits.

PAUL speaks of the whole as completed by God, in Christ, and nothing more remaining to be done, but the communication of it to sinners by regeneration, repentance, faith, and every grace ; which are all, wholly the gift of God. " Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ ; and to make

all men see, what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." "That Christ may dwell in your hearts, *by faith*; that ye being rooted and grounded *in love*, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth, and height; and to *know the love of Christ*, which passeth knowledge, (i. e. far beyond all that mankind have hitherto conceived, otherwise there would be a flat contradiction) that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God." Ephes. iii. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to *all men*, (i. e. presents one and the same aspect to all the human kind, and the influence when known is alike on the hearts, and in the lives of all) viz. teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Who gave himself for us, (with as fixed a purpose of effectual application, as ever he had of meritorious impetration) that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people (standing in such a relation to him, as neither angels, nor any other creatures do) zealous of good works;" i. e. as grace appears, and salvation is brought to the soul by evidence of faith, a zeal for good works does follow. Also those men who, have manifestations of this grace

and falvation, are diftinguifhed from thofe who are not as yet acquainted with it, “*a peculiar people zealous of good works.*” Titus ii. 11. &c.

IT has been often faid, that guilt and righteoufnefs being of a personal nature cannot be transferred; and that the word of God confirms this, in that it is faid, “the foul that finneth it fhall die.”

IT has been with wonder and aftonifhment, that I have heard fome very fenfible men make this remark. Guilt and righteoufnefs are of a personal nature, we all allow; but the confequence does by no means follow, that they cannot be transferred by order of JEHOVAH. Nor can there lie one argument againft fuch a transfer, but what will lie with equal force againft any transfer of property, ever made in this world. What gives my neighbor a right to transfer his goods to me for money, or fome other valuable confideration? certainly nothing but this, viz. the goods were his property, and the money mine. God gives us the whole warrant and right of contract, transfer, and difpofal, and it is the fame in every cafe. *The difpof-er muft be the proprietor*, fo far as the difpofal is made; this will make it warrantable in every cafe in the univerfe, and nothing elfe can. “May I not do what I will with mine own?”

Now a creature cannot be an abfolute proprietor in any thing: This is peculiar to God. Yet creatures have delegated property, within God’s limitations. They have

no property in opposition to the claim of the Creator ; yet they have in opposition to the claims of their fellow creatures. Thus, this paper is mine, and not my neighbor's : But I cannot say it is mine, and not my Maker's. This applies to all that ever can be called the property of any creature. All our property, all that we are owners of, is ours only, in opposition to the claim of our fellow creatures. God is still as much the owner and proprietor of all things, as if he had never given any property to any creature, under any directions or limitations whatever.

I have a right to dispose of my horse, my labor, my land, &c. and my neighbor has no right to controul me. Yet herein, and in all my conduct, I am bound to obey the will, and attend to the orders of the great, and absolute Proprietor of all things. Under this limitation, so far as any thing is my own, I may transfer or dispose of it as I please ; and so may every creature of God, in like manner. Has not God himself the same right without limitation of a superior ? most certainly. It is only then to shew that God has as real property in all things, moral and natural, temporal and eternal, as I have in the pen I now hold in my hand ; and this will prove he has an equal right of disposal, by transfer or any other way. I can easily demonstrate this and much more.

THERE are several ways, in which mankind acquire property, in the limited sense aforesaid, or such property as we are capa-

ble of ; particularly by discovery and occupancy, by purchase, labor, free gift, &c. In these ways we have a right of disposal and transfer, under the direction of the great and absolute Owner of all things.

BUT we see in a moment, that no property or right we claim, in any of those ways, is in any measure equal to the right arising from *creation*, or the right of one who gives *whole*, *intire being* to what he claims. God has this right in every thing without possibility of exception ; in every existence natural and moral ; in all creatures, and in all done by creatures ; and in every disposition found in creatures, evil as well as good. All guilt and all righteousness are the absolute property of the great God. He is the origin and fountain of all holiness, goodness, righteousness ; “ there is none good but one, that is God.” As all creatures are his absolute property, so are all their dispositions and actions. Whether good or evil, it alters not the case.

IN this view of God, as being the absolute proprietor, and having the sole right of absolute disposal ; the devil with all that pertains to him, moral and natural, are as wholly and intirely God’s property as Gabriel is. A man may be owner of bad property as well as good, and so may God.

YOU have two sons in their minority, the one the best, and the other the vilest in the world. They are both alike yours, and at your disposal. One of your hands is wounded and in extreme pain, the other perfectly

well ; yet they are both alike your own. You have a flock of sheep in your pasture, and there is also a den of serpents on your land, which you bought with all its appurtenances. You are the owner and proprietor of those venomous serpents, as much as of your sheep, and have an equal right to kill them both ; the one for the supply of your table ; the other for the sake of being out of danger from their poison. You have an equal right to transfer them both. Some eminent physician may appear, who knows well how he can turn that den of venomous serpents to more advantage, and greater good to mankind, than he can all the sheep you possess. They are yours ; and you may transfer them to him.

So far as man is owner and proprietor of any thing, whether that thing be good or evil, it alters not the right of disposal in the least. If I could exercise true benevolence to my fellow men, in healing them, and in furnishing them with sure antidotes against mortal poison, by keeping a den of the most deadly serpents, under proper restraint ; I would do it. No man would say I did wrong : Or that I was not the proprietor of them, and had no right to transfer them ; because they are such evil, hateful creatures. Thus, the MOST HIGH turns his whole cave of devils to good account, and to the greatest perfection of benevolence, in a system replete with love. And so he does all the moral evil in the universe. He makes use of creatures and things of the moral kind, which

are infinitely hateful to him, *in their nature*, to answer great and good ends, *in the whole system*.

BUT God never made sin. Who did? The devil and wicked men. Be it so. Yet this devil and all his associates, and all wicked men, are God's property, *absolutely and wholly so*; and of consequence all their doings are equally his property. Sin is a property infinitely hateful in its nature; but it is not therefore the less at God's disposal, as his *own property*, by transfer, or any other way he pleases. God is an absolute sovereign in disposing of it just as he pleases. "May I not do what I will with mine own?"

ON the other hand. As to all righteousness; God is the original fountain of the whole, that ever did, or can exist in himself, and in all creatures. It is all absolutely his own property, as much after communication as before. And all the creatures to whom it is communicated, are in like manner his own. All the holiness found in their temper, character and conduct is so in every view; and Christ, as mediator and savior of the world, is as absolutely his, as any creature he ever made. "*Christ is God's.*"

Now, in the name of reason and common sense, what hinders a transfer, if God pleases? does he meddle with any thing but his own absolute property; to which no other Being in the universe has any opposite claim, any more that I have now a right to claim Godhead, as my own? Shew me, that JEHOVAH is dealing in something that is not

his absolute property ; and I will then, and not till then, deny that he hath a right to transfer guilt and righteousness, at his pleasure.

BUT if God is such a sovereign as this comes to, where is the safety of creatures ? where is the safety of man ? Be patient, kind reader, I will open to you a glorious foundation of safety, in its proper place. Take only this hint for the present. All the safety, hope, and happiness of man, and of the whole, intelligent system, lies in the *nature, moral character, eternal decrees, and sovereign will* of JEHOVAH alone. But this is a digression, to be resumed in its proper place.

IT is expedient here, that I shew what it is that ever induced any man, that hath acknowledged divine revelation, to draw a consequence so palpably erroneous, from a position that is very true. “ *Guilt and righteousness, say they, are of a personal nature : Certainly, therefore, God himself has no right to transfer them*” !!! That is to say, God has no more property in the moral system than I have ! JEHOVAH has no more right to give law to his creatures, than any one man has to another. The MOST HIGH has no right to covenant for his creatures, his own absolute property ; though I have a good right to covenant for my children in many things, and effectually bind them to abide by what I have done.

It is true, a man has no right to covenant for his own children, in matters of a *moral nature, matters of guilt and righteousness.*

What is the reason that he may not do this, as well as in *pecuniary* matters? It is only because God has given him his limits. Man is an absolute proprietor of nothing. He has a *limited* property, within certain bounds, and that under divine regulation; and thus far he may plead the general warrant of disposal, "*may I not do what I will with my own?*" Beyond this he may not presume. The same may be said of the highest angel; but not of God. He is wholly without limitation, with regard to his own absolute property, in all things *moral*, as well as all things *natural*. And in regard to *righteousness* and *guilt*, they are in all reason, and by every dictate of revelation, as absolutely, and justly at his disposal, as a sparrow, or a single hair of your head.

If any should here say, This makes God a guilty being, and his nature like the nature of sin. The cavil would be worthy of no other answer than this; If you own a very wicked servant, whose temper and conduct is hateful to you every day; you are certainly as wicked as he.

WE now conclude, that God may according to reason and common sense, transfer and impute guilt and righteousness. His word declares abundantly that he hath this right, and that he hath exercised it, to the most benevolent and glorious purpose. This is the grand distinguishing doctrine of divine revelation, which Paul considered as comprehending the whole. *This*, with its glorious

corrections and consequences, claimed his whole attention. "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." "God hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." "He was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our transgressions, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." "He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin."

REASON doth most fully warrant or support a salvation by a proper *vicar*, by *substitution*, transfer, imputation of guilt and righteousness. Not a single reason can be offered against it, but what will lie, even with greater apparent force, against your right of transferring one shilling for a supper; or redeeming your own brother out of prison, by the *vicarious transfer* of one pound. Reason, I say, tells us in the clearest, possible manner, that God may so redeem man, if he pleases. But we are wholly indebted to divine revelation, to know that he hath so done. If he hath not there told us so; it is utterly beyond all the power of language ever to communicate that idea. Give up this doctrine, and we may still reckon the bible among good books, and

even call it the best on the whole. Yet there will be nothing left, to distinguish it from the works of Plato, Cicero, Seneca, &c. otherwise than as any one good writer may somewhat excel another. If all mankind would abuse *all words* as they do *some terms*, who deny that the salvation of finners is founded on a *proper substitution*; all use and benefit of language would be forever at an end.

THE reason why any run so wild in this matter, is, because they have not a true knowledge of JEHOVAH. They reason about "the possessor of heaven and earth," who is under no limitation, "and who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will;" just as they would about the conduct of creatures, who have no absolute property, and are capable of none.

HERE, many have found fault with that most clear doctrine of divine revelation, that God constituted Adam a fœderal head for all his race; in language like this. "*I was not present;*" "*I knew nothing about it;*" "*I did not agree to it;*" therefore it is unjust that I should be holden by it." Unthinking man! Do you not so far as you have property, make bargains and covenants to bind your heirs and successors, and those unborn too? Will you not hold fast a privilege acquired in a covenant way, by your great grandfather, or any predecessor at the distance of many generations, and descending to you by right of heirship? What if your neighbor should come and claim

your farm, and say, this was my grandfather's ; and he sold it ; and I was not present. I never gave my consent ; and I will not be holden by what he did. I will have the farm. Would you not tell him that his predecessor did nothing but what he had a right to do ; and bid defiance to his claim ?

BUT God hath a better right to the disposal of all things, *moral* and *natural*, than ever any man had to that of his land. Besides, he covenanted only for his *own children*, his *own offspring*. In this view, all mankind stand in a much nearer relation to the common Parent of all, than ever any child did to an earthly parent. And we can no more dissolve this relation by all our sins, than the wickedness of your son, can make him cease to be *your son*. Moreover, the covenant God made with Adam, was infinitely better than we could have made for ourselves, had we been present ; as will abundantly appear in the sequel. However, God had full right to make it, and *confirm it*, and that on both sides too, upon the ground of absolute and universal property.

WHEN you covenant with your neighbor it is proper for you to say, *I will if you will* : I propose, and wait for your consent. Otherwise there can be nothing binding. You make one part of the covenant, your neighbor the other : for you are equals. It is not to with you, and that Being, " of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things." He every where makes both parts of the covenant, and would descend infinitely be-

neath his right and dignity if he did not. His language to man is, *I will, and you shall*; and never leaves it at the election of man, to comply with his covenant, or refuse with impunity.

BUT, some have imagined that this idea of justification, by a *true and proper atonement, substitution, or ransom*, is inconsistent with free justification by grace, or free salvation by mere mercy, so often spoken of in scripture. This is so far from being a just remark, that I am bold to affirm, that free grace and mere mercy abound to sinners in this way, more than could be possible in any other way. *It is all grace, displayed and communicated to sinners, in the most gracious way.* Was it not infinite, sovereign grace and mercy in God that first moved in this grand affair? in the Father, to give the Son of his love to suffer and die for sinners, and in the Son to consent, and undertake? Is not the whole purchase, all of mere, sovereign grace and mercy as it respects sinners, in all their guilt and enmity against God? “While we were without strength, in due time, Christ died for the *ungodly*.” “God commendeth his love, i. e. displays it to the very best advantage, in that while we were *yet sinners*, Christ died for us.” Hence the apostle argues the certainty of the application of the salvation thus purchased for sinners, while in their *very worst condition*. Because they were *even then justified*, by the blood of Christ, before they knew any thing of it; before repentance, or faith, or regene-

ration, or any change in their hearts towards God : Justified, I say, by Christ their surety and Redeemer, in the presence of God, long before they had any knowledge of it by faith ; or any comfort in the great work that the second man had finished. What can be plainer than the following words ? “ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, *when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son ; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*” Rom. v. 8, &c. Thus the atonement is so far from any thing inconsistent with free grace and mere mercy, that God thereby displays and communicates it to the utmost advantage, “ *commendeth his love.*”

MEN often greatly derogate from the free grace which they bestow, by the manner in which they communicate it. Your neighbor received from his father, as good an inheritance as you did from yours ; and in both cases, the gift was of mere parental love, or free grace. Whenever he petitioned his father with regard to the expected plantation, he was answered with frowns, and kept much in suspense, for forty years. His father used often to tell him ; “ Son, I will have you to know, that I will make you sure of nothing ; I will keep you doubtful, and will do as I please.” After forty years, his father, at his death, left him the estate ; but he might rather thank death for the comfort of his fortune, than his father.

YOUR father gave you just as much, of his free grace likewise ; but in a different mode. When you was twenty two years of age, he called you to him, and with a paternal complacency in his countenance, addressed you thus. “ My son, you are sensible God has blessed me with a plentiful estate, for which I wish ever to be thankful. One half of my estate is more than I can use to any advantage, otherwise than to communicate comfort to others. You, my child, are in the bloom of youth, and I wish to make you as useful and happy as I can, in early life, and all your days ; I have therefore given and confirmed to you my house in the next street, and the five hundred acres of land adjoining. The deed was executed last year ; and that you may have the comfort of your estate, and every encouragement and motive to industry and usefulness, I now give you the deed, by which I have made the whole sure to you.” Then he gave you the instrument under his hand and seal, well executed : Adding ; “ paternal affection is a mighty principle in the human soul ; I wish divine Providence may give you experience of it ere long, in domestic connection.” You went immediately into the possession of your fine estate ; and have had great comfort in it these forty years.

YOUR neighbor is now at last, as wealthy as you are ; but he has been in doleful suspense and anxiety this forty years, often surmizing he should die a beggar. He hath not enjoyed the comforts of life as you have ;

nor had those encouragements and motives to industry; nor loved his father half so well as you have yours. True, at last, when covered with gray hairs, he has received the same free grace from his father that you have from yours; but in a manner very different. You had a title, by *firm* covenant in early life, founded on *mere grace*: He was kept at *sovereign mercy*, in distressing suspense until he was an old man, and then was made rich by *free grace* likewise. Now, my reader, is there not as much grace in the conduct of your father towards you, as your neighbor has experienced from his father? Was not the manner of communication as gracious, and much more so? Just so, our heavenly Father not only makes us rich by *mere grace*; but in the most *gracious manner*, giving us all possible sense of his infinite good will; and all possible comfort in the enjoyment; and every motive to gratitude and usefulness. And, the exercise of goodness through his own Son, in *federal capacity*, doth much enhance and commend this grace.

No person of ingenuity, will cavil at a similitude; because it is not in all respects a resemblance. None are so. If they illustrate the point aimed at, it is enough. The above is intended only to illustrate this truth, viz. Much of mere grace lies in the manner of bestowment.

Is the great affair of our justification; though it is legally due *from the Father to the Son*, in consideration of the atonement by

has made; yet the grace connected with it, is, in every view, infinite, and displayed in a manner gracious in the highest degree. It is grace, free, sovereign grace, in the eternal counsels of heaven: All grace in the decree: Grace in the gift, and in the undertaking: Infinite grace in all Christ has done and suffered, as it respects sinners: Sovereign grace in their regeneration, conversion, the gift of repentance, faith, holiness, consolation, perseverance, eternal glory: All grace, free grace, sovereign grace, unfathomable riches of grace, *from God to man*; though the Son hath a claim of righteousness on the Father, and pleads for the *unjust* and the *ungodly*, on the ground of the covenant. From the foundation to the top stone thereof, all is “brought forth with shouting; crying grace! Grace! unto it.”

IF we attend to the threefold office of our SAVIOR, as *Priest*, *King*, and *Prophet*; we shall find the final salvation of every human creature made sure in him.

THAT Christ doth sustain these three distinct offices, as our Redeemer, I suppose, none will deny; since he is expressly designated by each of these appellations, in sacred scripture, in a great many places; and since kings, priests, and prophets, as types of Christ, speak of his doings and sufferings as their own. “They pierced my hands and my feet.” “They shall look on *me* whom they have pierced, and shall mourn

for *him*." "A priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec." "Give thy judgments to the King." "A King shall reign in righteousness." "King of Kings." But I suppose it wholly needless to adduce proof of this matter, and would only exhibit the demonstration arising from the character of Christ, as *prophet, priest, and king*. It is manifest that *all these offices are equal*, as to their extent and operation. Christ is just as far, and as extensively a King over mankind, as he is a Priest and a Prophet; and as far as he doth exercise these offices at all, among the human kind, he doth exercise, and engage to exercise them all unto perfection.

Now, it is universally allowed that Christ is a Prophet, Priest and King, in some respect, and in some degree, to *all* mankind: that the world enjoys many common favors through his atonement, and government of the world; and that all the light, knowledge, and instruction mankind enjoy, is through him, as his gift. But then, the *limitarians* would make one office of Christ, much less extensive than another. "His atonement, say they, is abundantly sufficient for all. As a Priest, he wears an equal aspect to all, presenting his infinite atonement to every man alike. As a King, he governs and will govern all creatures, by his almighty power, with uncontrouled effect, according to his own will; either to make them dutiful subjects, or to punish them as rebels. He will dispose of all men,

and all things with an irresistible arm; saving only, that the moral dispositions of most of the children of men shall be exempt from his kingly government, and remain unconquered. He will subdue *some things*, but not *all things*, to himself. He will make *some knees* to bow, but not *every knee*. He will bring down *some high thoughts*, but not *every high thought*." Thus they extend the sacerdotal far beyond the regal office of Christ.

As to his prophetic office, they restrain and limit that very much indeed. They allow that he gives common light and knowledge to mankind in general; but not that saving light which is, by way of distinction, called the *true light*. They allow that he is the *common light*, but not the "*true light*, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." They will make a great distinction, or limitation, where the inspired Evangelist makes none at all. They will not allow that "in him was life; and the life was the light of men," without a word of limitation. John i. 4. But make the three offices of Christ aforementioned, quite unequal, as to their extent and efficacy.

PAUL represents the offices of Christ as co-extensive. Effectual calling is by virtue of the prophetic and kingly office of Christ: justification pertains to the sacerdotal, or priestly office, by the atonement: The sanctification, perseverance, and glorification of sinners, result from all the offices of Christ alike. This apostle tells us that where one of these offices is exercised, the other two are,

in every instance. Rom. viii. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us ALL, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" - - - -
 - - "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." As to the extent of this love, we are left at no loss, being told that "God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If you would know how many shall believe and be saved, Jesus tells you in the next words: "For God sent not his Son into *the world* to condemn *the world*, but that *the world* through him might be saved. John iii. 16, 17. Would you know how far the light of Christ, and his prophetic office to mankind, shall finally extend, see John i. 7. "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that *all men* through him might believe:" The same is affirmed John xvii. 21. "That *the world* may believe that thou hast sent me."

I HAVE before shewn that the eternal de-

creed of JEHOVAH, the firm predestination of heaven, or the infinitely merciful election of God, as it respects mankind after death, comprehends all alike.

It appears that "the head of every man is Christ," 1. Cor. xi. 3. and that in the covenant of redemption, all mankind were given to the *Second Adam*, as they were once included in the *First*; that he undertook to redeem them by *price*, by *power*, and by *application* of the atonement he engaged to make; and which, in the fulness of time, he did make: That nothing can resist his power as King eternal, immortal, invisible: That our whole salvation is committed to him, in every view, and in every part of it, as *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last: That "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ:" That he is of one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, that he doeth: That of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: That he hath placed himself on the mountain of his holiness and strength, and that, in his own time, he will take away the veil of darkness, and covering of ignorance, that hath been spread over all the nations of the earth; and will shew them that death, *spiritual* and *eternal*, is swallowed up in victory; and exhibit the gospel feast of joy and glory to all the world.

Thus, as on a glorious and holy mountain, doth he take his station, and, in divine majesty and love, proclaim aloud, saying,

“ In this mountain, shall the Lord of hosts make unto *all people* a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined; and he will destroy, in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off *all faces*; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away, from off *all the earth*: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation; for in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest.” Isai. xxv. 6, &c. This well agrees with what has been said of the progressive manifestations of grace and salvation to men. Infinite wisdom hath seen best to keep a veil and a covering over all nations, in a greater or less degree; and to draw it aside a little, by slow gradations, until the glorious removal of it, in full display, on the mountain of the Lord.

THE certain salvation of the human kind, may be argued from the doctrine of repentance, as preached by Christ and his apostles.

ALL will allow that repentance is certainly connected with pardon and salvation. Now, wherein does this certain connection consist? Does it merit pardon? No: Does it at all change the eternal, immoveable purpose of

God? No: Does repentance save us, as a meritorious good work, or good disposition in the soul? No: How then is repentance surely connect'd with pardon and life? As God's ordinance, and as a fit temper of mind, without which, in the very nature of things, pardon and heaven itself could be no blessing. This is, indeed, the true answer.

Now, who gives repentance to finners? Who makes this gospel qualification sure to them, before they go to heaven? Does it depend in the least on themselves? So far from this, their whole souls oppose it with all their might. Can any creature give it to another? No: Do finners ever before they are penitent, do any thing to render it reasonable that God should give to them repentance rather than to others? No. Repentance is a free, sovereign gift of God in Christ, who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, for his own name's sake, and for his own praise. And Jesus is exalted to grant this grace, just as much as the remission of sins, in consequence of it. He gives the former, only as the necessary channel, or medium by which pardon and salvation can come to the soul. The gift of this grace is just as much within his commission, as *Mediator* and *Savior* of the world, Savior of all men, as is the bestowment of pardon and heaven. "Him hath God exalted, with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to *Israel*, (all are *so*, in union with Christ, by human

nature, and by covenant) and forgiveness of sins." Acts v. 31.

THE prayer of Christ is efficacious. "Him the Father heareth alway." He has prayed for the pardon of those that you would exclude, if you exclude any of the human kind; even *Judas*, and *Pilate*, and *Herod*, and the malicious chief Priests, and murderous, bloody band of soldiers, and all that mocked and derided him, on the day when he finished the great work. For all these he surely poured out an effectual, fervent prayer; "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." In this prayer which the Father certainly heard, (as he does alway without a single exception) Jesus comprehended every sinner in the world; for every sin doth crucify the Son of God. By this, and his other effectual intercessions, he ensured the promised grace, to take hold of their hearts in his own time. "They shall look on him whom they have pierced and mourn."

THE gift of repentance as well as of faith, and every other grace, is only that the sure pardon and salvation may be known and *enjoyed* by the soul, in God's chosen way, and in the only *proper*; or even *possible* way. Thus, as *peculiar to the gospel*, all men every where are commanded to repent. Acts xvii. 30. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERY WHERE TO repent." Repentance is preached for the remission of sins, which remission was made as certain before as after-

ward. It was by the atonement of Christ ascertained, *in itself*; but by way of repentance it is made sensible to sinners.

CERTAINLY, repentance, *as an exercise* in the human soul, does not create its own object, or lay its own foundation, any more than faith does, or love, or hope, or joy, or any grace whatever. They all agree in this, that they are all built on a firm foundation which they had no hand in laying. This foundation of God standeth as sure, when these graces are not in exercise, as when they are, and before their implantation as after their utmost perfection. The foundation of God hath the seal, *not of alterations in creatures*, but of his own eternal decree, and his knowledge of our salvation founded thereon. Let the mind of man, *at present*, be in what state it may, “nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.”

WHEN all men are commanded every where to repent, no doubt, saving, evangelical repentance, is the thing commanded, and this, we know, is the exercise of a new heart, and implies union with Christ by regeneration, or a new creation in him. The very command implies, that this is made sure, and all the benefits connected with it, as what Christ has laid a foundation for. The doctrine preached is only a piece of good news, founded in *truth* and *certainly*, as all other gospel doctrines are. The doctrine is an object of faith, as all other gospel doc-

trines are. It has a reasonable duty connected with it; which is common to all gospel doctrines.

WHEN the doctrine of repentance is preached for the remission of sins, this remission is always considered as sure in Christ. Repentance as a fit temper of mind to receive it and enjoy the benefit, is also engaged by him, who orders the doctrine to be preached. Christ considers all nations of the earth, and every human creature as reconciled to God, by his blood, and God to them. What remains, in the preaching of the gospel, is that they be brought to the knowledge, sense, and enjoyment of it, that it may have proper influence on their hearts.

BEFORE Peter thus understood the matter, he had an objection against preaching the doctrines of faith, repentance, and salvation to the gentiles. He had no idea they had any right, *secured in Christ*, to these favors; therefore he had no news of that kind to tell them. His objection would have been founded in all the reason in the world, had the position been true, that the gentiles were *not cleansed in Christ*, and reconciled to God *by him*, and God to them. Had this been the case, Peter ought not to have preached to them the gospel of repentance and reconciliation. But Christ tells him, that his fundamental principle in this matter was not true, forbidding him to assert it again; "What God hath cleansed that call not thou common;" i. e. *unclean*, or *unfancified in Christ*; or unaccepted of God, *in him*. See

the vision of the sheet and its explanation, Acts x. and xi.

HENCE it appears that all mankind, "even *while enemies*, are *reconciled* to God, by the death of his Son, and much more, *being reconciled*, shall be saved by his life : " i. e. because he lives at the Father's right hand, to make effectual application of his atonement, which he does by sending his Spirit into the hearts of men, to renew them ; and by conveying to them in his own time, the doctrines of repentance, faith, and every grace and virtue ; and making these doctrines take effect. We are after reconciliation saved by his life, *much more*, i. e. most evidently and certainly, as he lives an almighty and faithful Savior, exalted with God's right hand, a Prince and Savior, to make *application* of the benefits of redemption, to give repentance to his redeemed (called his Israel) and forgiveness of sins.

REGENERATION, repentance, faith, love, hope, joy, every virtue, and every good work wrought in us, or exercised by us, all agree in this, viz. They are all so many fit and necessary steps, which the almighty Redeemer takes with human souls, to acquaint them with his meritorious impetration, give them comfort in it, and affect them suitably by it in their hearts and lives. There is no strict propriety in preaching any of these doctrines as *gospel*, i. e. as news founded in facts, that ought to be believed ; unless all is made true and sure in Christ before we have any acquaintance with the tidings, or

any operation from them. The whole preaching of the gospel, in every article of it, is only the announcing of immutable truth, not created or altered by our hearing of it. Which truth it is good for us to know, and hath a good effect and consequence.

IN hearing the doctrine of repentance, we learn the nature of it; the good effect of it in our great comfort and usefulness; the meet fruits of it, which are all very good; and also that Christ is exalted by God's right hand, to give it to the world, whose sins he died to take away. Thus the pardon comes, to their conviction and comfort, by the doctrine of repentance for the remission of sins.

THEY, who would make repentance, faith, regeneration, or any other grace, means necessary to our salvation, say right. But they who make them terms of distinction *in us*, to give us a sure title to salvation, put our safety now on the same footing or ground, on which Adam stood at first, as to the general nature and reason of it. Adam must have had a good heart and a good life, and then he would have been safe; yet *all* would have been *of God's grace*, or free gift, as every body will allow: For his whole being was so. Now, say they, we must have *good, penitent, believing, holy hearts*, in a good degree, *all of God's grace*, and then we have a title to his favor, and not otherwise. We need not be quite so good as Adam must have been; but our safety stands on the

same general ground, and in a good degree too. The degree alters not the nature or ground of our safety : The general reason is wholly the same. Both stand on personal qualifications.

BUT the truth is, Adam stood wholly on his personal qualifications: We stand wholly on those of Christ ; and enjoy the comfort and operation of them, by regeneration, faith, repentance, and every virtue. To suppose otherwise, is, at best, falling into the *neonomian* scheme. The retainers of which, say, that the terms of our acceptance with God, are much lowered since the fall of Adam, the conditions much mitigated ; but that we stand upon personal qualifications, such as they be, *in the gospel demand*, as much as Adam did, on the higher qualifications of the first covenant.

ANY impartial mind, with proper attention, will see, that we fall into the self same doctrine, as to the general and real nature of it, if we insist on any kind or degree of qualifications in creatures, as *terms* of acceptance with God ; or, otherwise than as the work of God's almighty power, and free grace in us, in order to give us the knowledge of our previous acceptance with God in Christ alone ; and to form and attemper our souls to the enjoyment of life and eternal salvation, made sure by the covenant of redemption, and the faithful engagement of the Son of God, and sealed on his cross. If we depart from this plan of hope, it is indifferent whether we call ourselves *papists*

or *protestants*, *arminians* or *calvinists*, *reconformians*, *antinomians*, *new divinity men*, or *quakers*; inasmuch as we shall all agree in the grand principle, the cardinal point: viz. *That our acceptance with God, and our certain salvation, does rest on valuable qualifications, whereby we are distinguished from other men.* Yet all agreeing in this, even that God by his mere mercy and free grace, hath made the saving distinction. Thus we all, in our hearts, join with him of old in pleasing devotion; "God I thank thee that I am not as other men." He acknowledged the free grace of God, as much as any *limitarian* ever did.

It is a further symptom that the way of life I am pleading for, is agreeable to the gospel; that believing in it will certainly make us hate all sin, all ungodliness. Or to speak with more accurate propriety, where this faith is, there certainly will be a bitter hatred and aversion to all ungodliness. The very discovery of God which I am speaking of, that view of the Redeemer, that exhibition of the divine character, necessarily involves in it a perception and sense of infinite amiableness, beauty and glory. The infinite loveliness of God, and salvation by grace through Jesus Christ, are the essential objects of the faith I maintain. This wholly agrees with the old calvinistic doctrine of saving faith. No acquaintance with God or divine truth, without a feeling impression of the divine loveliness on our souls, was ever

thought to be saving faith, by *Calvin, Owen,* or any eminent promoters of the protestant cause. Their object of faith is exactly the same which I contend for; and the manner of communication and operation is the same, as wrought by the power of God, working by love, and purifying the heart, even as God is pure.

WE do not consider assurance of our salvation to be of the essence of saving faith; but merely consequential, even as hath been usual with protestants. The faith we contend for, has nothing immediately and directly to do with ourselves, but with the object of our faith. When this faith is wrought in us, by the power and grace of God, and proper fruits ensue; thence we argue our own safe estate by way of consequence, and so make our calling and election sure. We unite with the orthodox in all ages, in saying, that hatred of all sin is the fruit of faith; or that saving knowledge and supreme love of God are through faith.

THE universal extent of Christ's saving power and grace, is further taught us by metaphors and emblems, which the divine Spirit hath made use of in the word. As that of the *dew*, the *wind*, the *rain*, &c. which are known to be of universal extent over the whole earth, at such various times and in such manner as God is pleased to direct. Perhaps no emblem is more significant than that of a *sun*, often made use of in the scriptures, as Psalm lxxxiv. 11. "For

the Lord God is a sun and a shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Mal. iv. 2. and in other places.

SIMILITUDES do not quadrate in all respects with the things illustrated by them; but wherein they do, we may argue with safety. Take the similitudes now referred to, and we shall find universal extent and operation, to be principal ideas suggested. A comment might be made on each of them, perhaps, with equal propriety. Omitting the rest, take that of *a sun*. It very well presents to our view the Sun of righteousness, the great Redeemer, in the extent, and benign efficacy of his mediatorial character.

THE sun is an object highly exalted above the world: So is Christ highly exalted. The sun is the fountain of light to the world: So is Christ the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person. The natural sun revives, quickens, gives life to all things in the natural world: So doth Christ with regard to the whole spiritual world. The sun hath various times and seasons of special influence, and does dispense his favors variouly to various parts of the world, at different times, seasons, and periods: So it is with the Sun of righteousness, in the spiritual world. Under the influence of the sun in the firmament, there is the vernal and the autumnal season, the summer and the winter, the darkness and the light, in various degrees, and the heat and cold in perpetual variation: So it is with

the various displays and dispensations of the great Redeemer, the Sun of righteousness. Something of this has been taken notice of before in the gradual progression of gospel light; and in the decrees of God, making many and great distinctions among mankind in this world, both of an outward and of a spiritual nature, and also in the world to come, with respect to degrees of exaltation and glory; though none as to the certainty of future salvation, to the body of Christ, who is the "head of every man."

THE natural sun is certainly and greatly beneficial to the whole world; though not to every part in the same manner and degree. The frigid zones seem least of all to feel the blessings of that glorious luminary; though they have their day, and a long one, and many other benefits derived from the sun. The torrid zone is, on the whole, favored far beyond those last mentioned, in many respects; yet the inhabitants of those climates have not near so many benefits from the sun as the regions included in the temperate zones. Moreover, each of those parts of the earth, is more blessed with the benign influences of the sun at one time than at another; and all of them more in the day time than in the night; more in the serene and clear day than in the dark and gloomy day. Many other remarks of this kind, will naturally occur to the mind of the reader.

It is to be observed, in general, that there is no season of the year, no period of

time, no hour in the stormy day, or midnight darkness, in which any part of the world is left wholly without any benefit, or even considerable benefit from the sun. Even in dead of winter, the sun is a great blessing to men : So even at the darkest or coldest midnight, it is neither so dark nor so cold as it would be if there were no sun. When any particular climate suffers most in the absence of the sun, yet the inhabitants of that particular climate, have such a connection with the world in general, and with those parts of the world where, at the same time, the influence of the sun is most replete with blessings, that they receive great benefit, though in a mediate and direct way. Each part of the world has at some times, the immediate and direct beams of the sun ; at other times his indirect and reflected influence, by the moon and stars. And, even when these appear not, still many and great benefits are derived to them ; without which they would be far more miserable than they ever yet were, in their most torpid or benighted circumstances. They always have some “ *precious things brought forth by the sun.*” Just so with regard to the “ true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.” The Lord is good to all ; and his tender mercies are over all his works. All the human kind are at all times much the better for Christ. He hath always a desire to the work of his hands.

THE COVENANT people of God, under every dispensation, may be compared to those di-

mates and regions most peculiarly under the blessings of the natural sun. Different dispensations among them compare with different seasons of the year. Special providences, propitious or adverse, are like the interchange of calm sunshine and angry storms. The first openings of divine revelation are similar to the first streaks of dawning day: Increasing light is like the gray of the morning. The Jewish dispensation was, at first, like the horizontal beams of the rising sun. As light was added, under that dispensation, the sun advanced towards the meridian. Christ and the inspired apostles, with the light at that time poured in upon the world, may compare with the sun in his strength. "His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." "I am come a light into the world." And "ye are the light of the world." There is much in sacred writ to support this analogy.

As it is demonstrated concerning the sun in the firmament, that his influence is more intense some time after the meridian is past, than before; so the blessings of the great Redeemer have been increasing, since he was on earth in the form of man, since "he ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea for the REBELLIOUS *also*, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Psalm lxxviii. 18.

EVERY part of the pagan world, all nations of the earth unacquainted with divine revelation directly or immediately, have indirectly something valuable of the same

light and knowledge, in various degrees and measures, by connection with the people of God, more or less, by tradition, communication, &c. Even as every part of the earth, has always, both in winter and summer, in every season of the year, by day and by night, some benefit more or less from the sun; if not by his direct beams, yet by the reflected or refracted. There are no people in the world, but what have some religion. Yet probably there never would have been any in the world, had there been no revelation from God. Yea, perhaps, the existence of a God would never have been thought of, had he made no sort of revelation more than in the works of nature and providence. It has been the opinion of some of the greatest of men, that the first intimation of a Supreme Being, was owing to divine revelation: Although, when the hint was thus given, the nations of the earth, with this leading thought, could demonstrate his existence from the works of nature. However this may be, there is no nation on earth, which is not enlightened by Christ, in some degree or other, by his word, spirit and providence, in such manner as infinite wisdom and goodness hath seen best. In this sense is the apostle to be understood, when he says, "the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven." For this never had been done by express revelation, or direct communication of the knowledge of Christ.

ALL mankind have some religion, which

came to them through Christ; though many have never heard of his name. All people know the truth, in some degree. All are orthodox in some points, and right in some measure. God manifests himself, and gives knowledge and instruction of all kinds, to the inhabitants of this world, and indeed to all intelligent creatures, only in and through Christ. All common sense, all extraordinary endowments of mind, all science and learning, all new inventions of every kind, all acquaintance with moral and spiritual things, are by Christ. Hence he is called the word of God; because as men convey knowledge and instruction by their words, so doth God by the Mediator.

WHEN man fell, he was then immediately in total darkness, as to any impressions on his mind, or mental exercises that might profit him. The mediation of Christ began that very moment. The guilty pair were immediately put in better circumstances, by the Son of God, than otherwise they would have been. And it is the general opinion of divines, I think, with good reason, that they were soon regenerated and brought back to the saving knowledge of God, in a way of special illumination, repentance, and faith. There was, however, a blessed degree of the power and influence of the Mediator on their minds, immediately after their fall; and there ever has been on the minds and dispositions of all their children. None have ever been nearly so bad, as if there had been no Mediator. Common grace, as we term

it, having always been an unspeakable favor to all the fallen race. And this is as truly and really by and through Christ, as eternal salvation is.

THE influence of the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven, on the hearts of men, has always been sovercign, and very various; as much so as the light and influence of the sun on the earth has been in the various parts of it, and in the various seasons of the year: Yet all are much the better for the Sun of righteousness. It is a universal proposition and every where true, that "the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light;" i. e. with a vision more or less perfect; with some degree of illumination; "and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." So in Isaiah li. when God speaks of his fixed determination to save sinners, his established purpose and judgment in that matter, he saith, "I will make my judgment to rest for a light to the people, my righteousness is near, my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people. The eyes shall wait upon me, and on mine arms shall they trust." "My salvation shall be forever: and my righteousness shall not be abolished." "My righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation."

THE MOST HIGH speaks of the light of Christ, as a growing and spreading light, until, in the end, all the world shall behold his glorious beams, and feel his saving

power. Isaiah ix. "Arise shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." "And the gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee; the forces of the gentiles shall come unto thee." "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far." And it is observable, as God is speaking of his covenant mercies in Christ to the ends of the earth, it is subjoined towards the close of the chapter, "Thy SUN shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." And to the same purpose it is said, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

IN all this provision, and diffusion of saving light and grace to men, God is as free and sovereign as in creating the sun in the firmament, and in disposing of all his benefits. And as "he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good," so likewise hath he no regard to any distinction seen in the human kind, in the bestowment of saving mercy. Many differences is he pleased to make in this world, and that as becometh his holy sovereignty; but none, *none at all*, as to the final extent of salvation, or the efficacy of the Sun of righteousness.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF HUMAN NATURE, is so plain a scripture doctrine, that we cannot deny it, without rejecting the whole authority of divine revelation.

THE doctrine is this: That the whole human nature, included in the first man, was, by the fall, left totally destitute of any moral or spiritual good; and that fallen man became as bad in a moral view, as fallen angels, at their first apostacy, according to their inferior natural capacity.

THE angels who had fallen sometime before man, had increased their wickedness, by the exercises of it; and man was in the like sure way to increase his, and by the same cause. Every power, every faculty of the soul, was left without any, the least degree of moral good; all dreadfully polluted; "every imagination of the thought of man's heart was evil only, and that continually." The depravity was total. And there was nothing left in the soul of man, of a moral kind, but enmity against God. I should here take up the demonstration of this at large, were it not so fully done already, by the most able divines, in a way of the plainest scripture reasoning.

I HAVE said, and I here repeat it, the mediation of Christ, in favor of all human nature, began the moment after the fall. In Adam and Eve was all human nature included, or, in Adam alone: For the woman was from him. Christ, by his merciful energy, began immediately to with-

stand the force of man's depravity, and has done so ever since, in a greater or less degree, in all human nature, in every child of Adam. Otherwise, mankind would all be as bad as the devils, according to their measure of being ; but we know they are not. The Mediator was a sovereign in the measure of good influence he granted at first to the fallen pair, and in all additional measures of grace of what kind soever ; and is so still, and always will be, as it highly becomes his character always, and in every thing, to keep up a view of his holy sovereignty. At what time he regenerated the souls of our first parents, we cannot say, or what measures of grace he was pleased to give them while they lived.

HE now gives unto some, much more of his kind influence from their infancy, than others ; and to some increasing favors of this kind, all their days. Some have less and less of it all their days, and so grow worse and worse. But none, in this life, are ever found without some degree of grace or favor from the Mediator ; such as preventing goodness, restraining grace, some checks of conscience, some humanity and kindness to their fellow men. Be it granted that all this is from merely selfish motives, and destitute of all moral good, and that there is sin worthy of damnation, in regard to deficiency, in all their honor and honesty, in all their industry and the public good they do, and in all the benefits they communicate.

Grant all this, which indeed is true ; yet there is much of the grace of the Mediator in hindering their being and doing worse. Christ, by his providence and spirit, mercifully and powerfully resists the awful force of their depravity, at all times, even though he has not yet renewed them in a saving manner.

To illustrate the above remarks. God says to Abimelech, “ I with-held thee from sinning against me.” Though he was guilty of great sin in all he did, even in dismissing the wife of the patriarch, not doing even that in faith and from a principle of friendship to God ; yet a blessed degree of God’s grace was granted him. God in his providence, and, it should seem, by some special influence on his mind and inclinations, kept him from a great sin. There never was any man on earth left to the whole force of his natural depravity : No, not Cain, or Ahab, or Jezebel, or Judas himself. If otherwise, Cain would have killed his parents as well as his brother ; Ahab would have murdered many besides Naboth, thousands more than ever he did. Jezebel’s whoredoms and witchcrafts were many ; but they would have been many more, had not the Mediator’s grace resisted. And, were it not for this grace, Judas would have been a much greater thief and murderer than he was. It was this that made him repent, and bear his last testimony in favor of the Redeemer. And even this good almighty government of Christ to ordered, that he hanged himself,

before he had further added to his wickedness ; though this was done by the instrumentality of Satan, as the immediate agent.

THE reader may now want I should shew, if I can, that Judas did not go to an eternal hell. I will take notice of this, in its proper place, and so of every thing else that he may think of, as he goes along, as impatient to have at that moment discussed.

BUT, not to digress further, I would add concerning the grace which the Mediator afforded even Judas, in his highest pitch of wickedness. Had it not been for the gracious, resisting power of Christ, he would have boasted of his treason ; strengthened his malice ; been foremost, with his own hands, in nailing Jesus to the cross ; been the loudest to mock and deride his dying agonies ; and then gone on to murder all the disciples of Christ : And where would he have made a stand ? Surely not until he had hanged himself, which he would have done at last. The same may be said of the most horrid monsters of wickedness that ever have been in the world ; *Herod, Nero, Alexander, Richard III.* of Britain, *Beagle, Benedict Arnold, &c.* Not one of these, or any other on earth, were ever, in any measure, so horribly wicked as they would have been, had all restraints been taken off. And all the restraints that ever were kept upon the wicked, are by the grace and power of the Mediator, and the purchase of his blood. The mercy, power, pity, and grace of the Redeemer is great and wonderful, even

where souls are not renewed. "The Lord is good unto all; and his tender mercies are over all his works."

I READILY grant there is a difference *in kind*, a *specific difference* between common, and saving grace; or that grace which the renewed have, and that which is common to men. But in these particulars they do indeed agree; both are free: Both are good, and valuable in their nature: Both from God only through Christ: Both wholly unmerited by sinners: Both bestowed on sinners who have equal dependence on God: Both are the fruit of the Mediator's undertaking for a guilty world, bestowed in God's own time and manner. So that the great excellency of one above the other, does not, in the least, militate against the present argument, to prove a real connection of the Messiah in a federal way with all mankind; but does fully confirm this doctrine, even as fully as if there was no specific difference between them.

THERE are innumerable good things of a nature specifically different, that are equally the gift and grace of the Mediator, as wisdom and wealth; health and a good name; all the five senses: All these are good, and all alike from the Son of God, as Creator and Governor of the world. Man could have enjoyed no good at all, had not a Mediator interposed; but the curse, in its most literal, plainest meaning, would have been executed. God was able to make Adam and Eve understand what he said to

them. They knew what was meant by the word *day*; and God was able to make them understand what was meant by the word *die*, or *death*. Otherwise he did, in effect, say nothing to them. If he did not make them understand him, there was no threatening at all, *as to them*, in what he said. They knew the day meant twenty-four hours, or a diurnal, apparent revolution of the sun. God made them to understand, that to *die*, signified, with respect to the body, a total cessation of all vital functions, all sensibility; and, with respect to the soul, the total loss of his moral image, and his favor forever more, with the miseries connected therewith, and the eternal pains due to the transgression of his holy and good law.

WHEN they had sinned, they really expected that, within that very day, as now described, their bodies would so die; and that, as they found their souls deprived of the moral image of God, they would forever remain so, with all the anguish and sorrow, pain and distress, contained in the malediction, to all eternity; even a duration absolutely interminable. This appeared in their fearful conduct, when "they heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day," i. e. in the latter part of that very day on which they rebelled.

No doubt, they thought he was come to execute the sentence upon them, just as he had spoken, and as they plainly understood. And they knew that this was just and righteous. But, to their great and joyful surprize,

they found it quite otherwise. A dark intimation was given them, in an indirect manner, of the ground God proceeded upon, to avoid the violation of his honor and truth, viz. a substitute, a vicar, an atonement, one in their place and stead, the seed of the woman. The Mediator began to officiate that moment for all the human kind. They were all present, all in the first pair. And he has constantly officiated for all the human kind ever since, and will until the curse is wholly wiped away. Sin reigned unto death, even then immediately upon the fall; and grace began its operation on the same day, and shall reign with an overcoming, prevailing triumph, to the end of the world, and to all eternity. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. v. 21.

At what time our first parents were renewed, is immaterial to the present argument; but it is certain the Messiah on that very day, operated, in a blessed and merciful degree. He spared their lives. They did not die an immediate and remediless death, as they deserved, and expected from God's own mouth. On that day, they were graciously pointed to an atonement. The great high Priest exhibited an oblation before their eyes; the import of which was, that one of their seed should be divinely qualified for a full atonement, and his death should stand for theirs. Then he took the skins of those beasts which were slain, and clothed

them. Which denoted that they were accepted, not in their own fig leaves, a garment of their own preparing, their own vile character; but in the character of the future Messiah, the cloathing or garments of his all perfect righteousness. Much grace and mercy was granted them on that very day; and more added, as a gracious Sovereign saw proper. So it is with all their poor, lost children. They have always much mercy and grace from Christ; and he goes on to the consummation of it as a gracious *Sovereign*.

ALL this is only in a gospel way; and so "the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven," even from the fall of man. i. e. Gospel grace was always manifested, or held forth, to all human creatures, in some degree or other. And where Christ begins a good work, as Mediator, he will perfect it, in his own way and time. It will issue in perfection at the great day. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. i. 6.

It is moreover evidential that this is the doctrine of grace and salvation; because this, and this only, excludes all boasting. *Good distinctions* are the *only* things that men boast of, or at least, what they value as good. If they come in a way of mere grace, without any hand of theirs in them, they always feel more pride in them, than if they came by their own good efforts. How proud are mankind of exquisite beauty; noble birth;

a grand estate descended down from an ancient and dignified family? Every body knows that good things of this nature are all of mere favor or grace, pure gifts of God, in the way of nature and providence.

SAY of a man, that he is descended of the most honorable family in the nation; that he has naturally the greatest powers of mind of any man in it; that he carries the greatest majesty, dignity and beauty in his countenance, and in all his gestures, together with the most unaffected, winning behavior; that in vigor and activity, he exceeds all: Add that he was made so, he was born with all this greatness and excellence in his very nature; and is indeed the completest work of God to be found within a thousand miles. You can say nothing that will take hold of the human heart, to make a man feel prouder; though you have not said one word, but what is an expression of free, sovereign grace, as the man himself will acknowledge. Indeed, he is much the prouder, on this very consideration, that so great a Being as God himself, has taken such peculiar notice of him, and singled him out as a special favorite.

LET another man hear it said of him, that he was in every view mean and contemptible by nature; despicable in soul and body throughout; of a scandalous family from generation to generation; but he has taken so much pains to become something, that he is really now, a man that ought to be respected, indeed a very worthy man. He

will hardly thank you for the compliment ; though you attribute the whole of his virtue and worth to himself.

VERY great distinction from others, in honor and happiness, is what men most pride themselves in ; and if this be owing to the peculiar notice of some great personage, it really adds to their gratification. Men are naturally proud of being peculiar favorites of the great. Mr. POPE, the celebrated poet, was a man more free from vanity, than most men ; but he betrayed much on an occasion, and at a time when it was least to be expected. In writing his last will, when his thoughts were full of approaching death and another world, his pride is apparently moved by a matter of free, sovereign grace, a peculiar mark of distinction from a king. In the bequest of a valuable ring, which might have been quite as well described without telling how he came by it, he says, "*the ring which the king of Sardinia gave me.*" All the poets used to speak in like manner, and they expressed human nature. If they had received only a pipe, or any other small matter of a renowned poet, or any man of great note, as a free gift ; they would be sure to take notice of the manner in which it came to them, valuing themselves on the mere gracious distinction of a renowned man. Such is human nature.

TELL a man that he is bad, how ready is he to keep himself in countenance, by enu-

merating many that do as he does ! If he thought himself distinguished from most others in wickedness, he would be far more ashamed. Whether it respects pride or shame, *peculiar distinction* is the grand thing ; and if that distinction come in a sovereign way, from a great personage, it is not the less, but the more flattering. To be mean, despicable, and contemptible by birth and nature, or to be esteemed so, mortifies human pride, more than to be so in any other way. Hence men are more mortified to be called fools, than knaves or cunning rogues. It is indeed, distinction from others in a way of excellence, real or supposed, that is in every case, a strong temptation to pride, in whatever way that distinction is made.

THE reader may then say, that there will be this temptation to pride among the saints in heaven, to all eternity : For there will be in heaven, great and everlasting distinctions of free grace. But this objection will vanish in a moment, when you consider that all fuel for pride to kindle, will be forever taken away in that world ; as no corruption at all will be admitted there ; no moral capacity of pride.

You will then say, that from this view of things, eminent advances in grace and favor in this life are strong incentives of pride, in the most exalted saints on earth. They are so. They always were, and always will be, so long as any moral depravity remains, or any principle of pride in their hearts. Paul found it so when God, of his free grace, set

him at a great distance from others, by special discoveries and divine raptures. 2 Cor. xii. Saints in heaven, will find the same thing operating in a way of the deepest humility, which now takes hold of their corrupt part, as an incentive to pride and self exaltation. On earth, spiritual pride hath always been a very dangerous and troublesome enemy to the comfort of eminent saints, indeed to all good people.

If you enquire, how did holy angels find pride originating or moving in them? I answer; this is a question that never was solved, nor ever can be, *by man*. It is a fact; but wholly incomprehensible by us, as innumerable other facts are. This, however, may be said, saints in heaven are secured by Christ; the fallen angels were not.

In a word, the most exalted saints in heaven, will be as much before others in humility, as in any other part of their holy attainments; and will bow as much lower before the throne of God, as they are exalted higher. Thus I am advocating the only rational, gospel doctrine, that will exclude all boasting. In heaven, it will be confirmed, when they will view the matter of their justification, the righteousness of Christ. "to all and upon all, without any difference."

THIS gospel doctrine tends greatly to the promotion of practical holiness and virtue.

THE bands of love and gratitude ever were, and ever will be, the proper bands of a man. Fear and terror, never yet had any

direct tendency to holiness and a good life. I mean common, legal fear. For it always carries in it, not only terror, but even odium of its object. It never attracts the soul to the object of terror, but quite the reverse. Love, or a sense of goodness, amiableness, kindness, or benevolence, always attracts and assimilates the soul to its object. As God hath constituted immortal souls and their objects, it cannot be otherwise. This is not only the clear doctrine of reason and scripture; but also the doctrine of all called orthodox, since the days of the apostles; remarkably so, since the reformation from popery.

It is true, papists and arminians have often told us that the doctrine tends to licentiousness; and that, if they believed the infinite steadfast, immutable love of God, and faithfulness of Christ, as we do, in respect to our salvation, the certain perseverance of believers and the like, they would indulge themselves in all manner of sinful lusts and pleasures. While their hearts are unrenewed, and while they believe not this glorious doctrine, they may think as they say. But did they believe, and feel the power of it, they would know better, as calvinists have always told them. They would find the cords of such love very different bands from what they imagine, while in ignorance of God and the power of his love.

What great things has slavish fear or terror ever done to make men holy? It will keep them from many open and daring

crimes, in the sight of man, it is true : But at the same time they will be just as guilty in the sight of God, as if they had no such fear. In their very souls, they will wish and long to commit them, as much as ever. In this wish, and longing desire of the soul, lies all the sin, in the sight of God.

PRINCIPLES of fear are managed to good advantage, by the laws and government of men. And without taking this great and good advantage of a principle of slavish, un-sanctified fear, in man, we could not live in human society. But the vile, hardened wretch, who is restrained in his overt actions, only by fear of the whip and the gallows, is as greatly guilty in the sight of God, as if these fearful restraints had never been upon him. The civil magistrate has much to do with this principle of fear in man. All human laws make great use of it ; and this is wise, and good for the end proposed. But alas ! how little doth this avail as to things invisible and eternal ? How little with the habituated drunkard ? How little with the inveterate thief and robber ? Take away the fear of visible, temporal punishment, and does it at all appear that the terrors of eternal damnation have any influence on their conduct ? Although they profess to believe the doctrine, and allude to it in almost all their conversation, their mouths being perpetually full of hell and damnation. Verily it is a sense of the goodness of God that leadeth to repentance, a true sense of God, *as love*, that meliorates the heart, with a di-

vine power on the life and conduct. "If ye love me keep my commandments." "Walk in love." "The love of Christ constraineth us."

I NEVER yet heard any man pray or preach to any congregation, without building on principles, which, by just, inevitable consequence, would infer the sure salvation of all the human kind, *at last*.

WE all agree in these particulars. We pray for the salvation of all. We, in the name of Christ, offer salvation to all on the purchase of his blood. In the name of Christ, we command all to believe. We tell all men that they have a good warrant to believe: That a sufficient foundation is laid for them all to believe; and that if they do believe they shall certainly be saved; and that not at all on the merit of their faith, but the merit of Christ: That their repentance and faith and whatever good may be in them, does not in the least alter the foundation, or object of their faith. We tell them that it is the greatest sin *not to believe*; that it maketh God a liar, as far as they are able. In the name of Christ, we promise them full pardon and life eternal, when they repent, and believe, and obey the gospel; and this, not in the least, *for* their repentance, faith, and obedience. What then, do we make of all these graces *in man*, but only means leading to the enjoyment of an end, not dependent on *these means*, but *they* dependent on *that*: Not an end which

these means do establish ; but established beforehand, as an immutable foundation, on which alone is built the propriety, use and necessity of *all these means* ?

I HAVE often heard much inconsistency, and contradiction in the prayers and preaching of good men ; but never heard one performing these duties, who did not adopt many sentiments, which, by just consequence, would infer the salvation of all mankind, made previously sure in the purpose of God, and the foundation he hath laid in Zion. This is consistent. Otherwise, the salvation of man is dependent on *himself*, if any thing can be *on a creature*. He depends on his qualifications and exercises of mind, as the foundation of all his hope. What God hath done is just nothing, or worse than nothing to him, without these distinctions *in himself*, or before he hath them. All God hath done gives him no security. As if one should say, that the will and testament of his father was not his security for the legacy ; but his opening and reading of the will, after his father's death, was the only thing that secured him. Would you not tell such an one that he did not speak with propriety ; that his whole security was in the will and testament of his father ; and that his opening and reading it only gave him knowledge of it and comfort in it.

We usually pray to God, just as Paul directed, and on the same ground which he has established. We pray for the salvation

of all men. This we ought not to do without a foundation in the word of God. If God has decided the point in his word, that many shall be damned eternally, in their own persons, we have no warrant to pray as we do. But the apostle bids us pray for the salvation of all men, even such wicked kings and magistrates as Nero, and the bloody, persecuting magistrates in those days, for all the cruel persecutors of the church, and for every body else, without a single exception; and then gives this as our warrant, "God will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." He also enjoins it upon us to give thanks for all men, on the same ground; because "Christ gave himself a ransom for all." At the same time, he plainly intimates, that the time was not then come to pour in all the light that God had designed in after ages; that a progression of light would continue as it had begun, and proceeded thus far; and that the glorious doctrine would be more fully manifest in due time. Read 1. Tim. ii. 1,—6.

THE most literal translation that can possibly be given of those words which I have more than once alluded to, is this; *a testimony for times proper*.* In the English bible it stands, "*to be testified in due time*." However, it is scarce worth while, in any place, to correct our last English translation of the bible: For every man that is well skilled in

* τὸ μαρτύριον καιρῶν ἰδίοις.

the original languages, who is also a man of candor, will bear me witness, that there is scarcely a single sentence in the translation, but what will bear, without marring the true sense any wise essentially.

IF it is certain, that the word of God, his justice and his glory, do ascertain the eternal, *personal* damnation of many; we ought to pray for that awful event, as explicitly as for any thing else. "*Thy will be done,*" ought to run through all our prayers. But how would it strike the minds of any congregation in the world, to hear him that leads in prayer, crying mightily to God, that many, or most of his fellow men, might be the miserable victims of his eternal vengeance *personally*, in hell to all eternity. Many men discern premises well, but do not see the just consequence. We have always seen it a clear gospel duty, founded on gospel warrant, to pray for the salvation of all men, and give thanks for all men, on the foundation laid in Christ. If a great many have not discerned the consequence of such premises, it is no more than what happens in many other cases every day.

I AM far enough from being an enthusiast, and believe I was never thought so by any person, but rather the reverse: However, I think it is good and sound reasoning, to argue from our own experience, and from what other honest people affirm to us from their experience. Having had the special

care of souls, many years, and been happy in my charge, I have often conversed with persons under special awakenings, and great concern about their souls. I have always kept up the holy law in their view, with all its infinite purity and strictness, and tremendous terrors to the enemies of God; have always told the distressed that they could *in no wise* help themselves, or make any distinction in themselves; charged them to make no dependence on their prayers, tears, reformations, or any thing they feel within themselves, but on the sovereign grace of God, through the atonement of his Son, totally exclusive of every thing else in the universe; always pointing them to Christ as the end of the law, in the stead of sinners.

I HAVE found numbers that have been by the Spirit of God, brought to this sense of the way of salvation, and have rested in it as a safe way. They have found it attended with evangelical repentance and great comfort. And hence have invited the vilest of sinners to come to Christ, and trust in him, without one moment's delay; telling them there was enough in Christ for their salvation, *vile as they now are*; that the atonement was sufficient to recommend them to God *in their very worst condition of soul and life*; and that they never could obtain any qualification, within or without, that would move the heart of God towards them; but that all things on God's part, are ready.

They have told me, that they never found themselves so unqualified, as when their

relief and comfort broke in upon them in a way of *mere faith*; and that they looked far from themselves, even as far as *Mount Calvary*, for all their hope; and that they saw all God had done to relieve their distressed souls, was done, sure and certain, long before they were born. And that they could make no foundation of hope in all that God had wrought on their souls, but praise his glorious name that he has been pleased, in mere, sovereign mercy, to work thus effectually on them, only in order to lead them to the sense and comfort of what was immutable truth before, viz. The all-sufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners. These persons have generally brought forth fruits meet for repentance, and walked as real christians.

THE observation of my fathers and brethren in the gospel ministry, as many of them have told me, is the very same in their concerns with souls, with what I have now mentioned. They have' also told me, it is their true experience with respect to their own souls, and all their comfort; and I am certain it is mine. It is well known that all pious protestant ministers have taken this very method in guiding souls to Christ. And all the success they have found, has been by thus cutting off sinners every way, as much as possible, from every dependence, but on Christ alone. God has granted his peculiar blessing on this doctrine, and this way of guiding poor, miserable sinners to a Savior. No minister of the gospel in this

land was ever more blessed of God in his labors, perhaps, than the renowned bishop *Stoddard*, of Northampton. Every one that is acquainted with his character and writings must be sensible that this was his method.

MANY, no doubt, were brought to know Christ, in that remarkable period, in the year 1740, and a few succeeding years, notwithstanding the great frailty and distraction of human nature appeared much in those days. All, so far as I can learn, who became true followers of Christ, in those times, built firmly on this very doctrine; that Christ alone is the compleat Savior of the chief of sinners, exclusive of every distinction in themselves, previously moving the heart of God towards them. or, in any wise, fitting them for mercy; that all that maketh them to differ from the most abandoned of the human race, flows wholly from a previous source, alike open to all, and built on a foundation as independent of man, as God was in creating him at first. It is well known that the most successful preachers in those days, dwelt mainly on these very doctrines.

THIS doctrine of saving, UNIVERSAL grace, is perfectly consistent with the most plain and positive declarations of the word of God, that the pains of hell shall be endless; and that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, in all the boundless extent of those words, and many others that convey the same idea of the

endless punishment of sinners, and that in the plainest possible manner of expression.

IN their Surety, Vicar, or Substitute, i. e. in Christ, "the head of every man," they go away into everlasting punishment, in a true gospel sense. In him they suffer infinite punishment, i. e. he suffers for them, in their room and stead. But how so? The divine nature never suffered, and the human nature was not infinite, nor capable of infinite sufferings; yet by union in person with infinite Deity, the gospel, the divine constitution does account the atonement infinite. The obeying, and the suffering human nature was as much united to all the attributes of Deity, as to any one of them; to Deity in all his infinite perfections; to the eternity of Deity as much as to his omniscience, almightiness, or any other attribute. And the sufferings of Christ are eternal sufferings, just in the same way of reasoning that they are infinite. The same ineffable, hypostatic union of human and divine natures, which connects infinity with manhood in one person, does equally unite eternity with the same. There is the same gospel propriety in calling them eternal sufferings, as infinite sufferings. It is only by personal union with Deity, that either term will bear.

THE apostle gives us this idea, as plainly as any other, to lead us to estimate the atonement complete for the sins of the world, and in the gospel account, an eternal punishment. He considers the gift of salvation by Christ, under the idea of a will or testa-

ment, that makes the legacy sure ; as sure before the legatee knows any thing about it, or has any comfort in it, as afterwards. And, as in all his writings, he exhibits the atonement complete in every other view, so he does in the eternity of it, in the divine account ; that none may imagine himself to be exposed to personal punishment in hell to all eternity, for want of an eternal atonement, any more than for want of an infinite one. He tells us that a sense of this, will free the conscience from every bond that might hold the poor sinner under obligation to suffer ; and will also become a spring of holy gratitude and living sacrifice to God. “ How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, *through the eternal Spirit*, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ?” Heb. ix. No person of judgment will say that the phrase, *through the eternal Spirit*, here signifies, that the eternal Spirit of God supported Christ in his sufferings : For he was then wholly forsaken in this sense, and left, in his expiring moments, without any support at all, as much as ever a victim was, when bound and bleeding on the altar. It was then he cried out, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me !”

WE cannot make the atonement sufficient for our redemption in any sense ; unless we consider the human nature infinitely dignified, by personal union with Deity, with every attribute of Deity, one as much as another. On this very ground it is, that

the merit of the atonement took place, and was efficacious long before Christ came in the flesh. Yea, from eternity, it was efficacious, on our behalf, in the mind and decree of God. And it was, from eternity, regarded in the gracious purpose of the Most High; as he always determined to save sinners in this way and no other. "Then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." Prov. viii.

THE atonement of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, was present in God's view from all eternity; and will be so to all eternity, as much as when he was actually bleeding on the cross, in all his amazing agonies. Thus he is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Or, if you put the adjective before the substantive, as a late writer does, and as it stands in the original, the idea is the same; "the slain Lamb from the foundation of the world."

Thus, at the great and solemn day, characters shall be separated one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. God will shew infinite approbation to the *character* of his own Son, the Son of man, as federal head in union with his redeemed creatures, placing *it* at his right hand; a phrase denoting approbation and honor. And he will manifest infinite wrath, indignation and vengeance against the real

character of man, placing it at his left hand ; which denotes the utmost detestation and abhorrence. The place of his Son will, on that day, be at his right hand, as it always was, and always will be, and “ where I am,” says Jesus, “ there shall my servants be.” The character of finners, the real character of all men since the fall, was always at God’s left hand, and always will be. God never abhorred man as his creature, never hated, and never will hate any thing in man, but his bad character. In Christ, he has no bad character, but one infinitely good. And God will bid all that sustain it, welcome to all the joys and glories of heaven ; even all whose sins the Lamb of God came to take away.

WHEN the great Judge shall give final sentence, and thus display his wondrous love to his elect head, and his elect body of human nature, also his tremendous abhorrence of the character of finners, it will make all human nature tremble. But they will *rejoice* with trembling. Their amazing sense of the holy indignation of God against sin, will not allay their holy joy, which will be in God alone, on that day, and to all eternity. They will see their personal deserts in the *eternal sufferings* of their Head : For in gospel account they are so ; though in time endured once for all on the cross. They will, I say, then, and forever-more, see their damnable character and deserts in themselves ; and will go away into everlasting punishment, in this sense. This is the

true, and only sense of the gospel constitution; which is well called a wonderful mystery, claiming the admiration and astonishment of angels and saints, now and forever.

To behold the redeemed surrounded with the most formidable displays of the wrath of God forever, against their real personal character *while in this world*, and with his awful indignation forever, as a burning flame, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; and to behold the very persons to whom this real character did personally pertain, made perfectly innocent in a substituted character, their robes all washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, with clean hands and a pure heart, dwelling in this devouring fire, and inhabiting these everlasting burnings, in displays of righteous and holy Deity; and yet perfectly blessed, and even the more blessed, for this their situation; in the midst of all these awful displays, dwelling on high, and having their place of defence the munition of rocks, bread given them and their waters sure: This is indeed a wonder of love worthy of the wisdom of God only wise. Isa. xxxiii.

ALL this glory and terror of divine holiness and justice, we see, and forever shall see, in the sufferings of the Son of God for sinners. And there is no more need of the eternal *personal* damnation of any of the human race further to display and illustrate the glory of God's justice, and his infinite holy anger against sin; than there is

need of the dim light of a candle, to help us to behold the beautiful face of the earth in the vernal season, when the sun shines in the meridian, with all his glorious splendor and in his full strength. Even to suppose otherwise, is in full opposition to the sole glory of God and Christ in the atonement. The gospel is, with great propriety, called a "ministration of righteousness." i. e. righteousness displayed, imparted, and applied, even as the ministration of healing medicines, imparted and applied for the recovery of the sick.

It is, moreover, evidential of the truth of this doctrine of free sovereign grace, as now illustrated, that *there is no possible danger in believing, and living according to the genuine dictates of it.*

It will certainly have the same influence on the heart and life, which the common protestant doctrine of grace always had; but only much more powerful in its blessed operations and effects. It is the self same doctrine, in all points but this: It extends the same eternal good will of God to all poor sinners of mankind; which we have been taught, by puritan divines, is confined only to a part; and it may be to a very small part indeed, agreeably to the more natural aspect of their doctrine. It differs no more from the doctrine of *Calvin, Owen, and Edwards*, and the great body of protestants, than a circle as large as the periphery of the earth, differs from a circle of the diam-

eter of one cubit. Both have all the same properties, and every demonstration may be built on the one, that may on the other; but only one is much larger than the other.

IN this case, we hold the great distinguishing doctrines of divine revelation exactly as they have always been taught, by those called orthodox. Particularly; the first Adam a federal, as well as natural head, for all human nature: Our fall, guilt and misery in and by him: The kind decrees, and immutable purposes of the Most High to save sinners: The covenant of redemption with the second federal head, even Christ, the second man, the Lord from heaven: The all sufficiency of his atonement, and his obedience unto death, in the room and stead of sinners: The necessity of regeneration by the almighty power, and free grace of God: The necessity of repentance, faith, and sanctification, a holy mind, perseverance to the end, all through Christ, and by the power of his spirit and grace. Yet, we think the doctrines of divine love, redeeming love and grace, include a greater number of poor, wretched sinners, all alike unworthy of mercy; than good people have, in time past imagined. This is the only point of difference.

I BELIEVE, God will have all men to be saved: That the Lamb of God hath taken away the sin of the world: Died for the sins of the whole world: That as sin hath reigned unto death, much more shall grace reign through righteousness to eternal life, by Je-

fus Christ our Lord. I believe all this, in the common, plain, natural sense of language; and so I do a thousand other plain assertions in the bible as full and direct to the same purpose as these are. Yet, I have every motive, even with additional force, to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness; to press into the kingdom of God; to make my calling and election sure; that ever was yet urged from the word of God: And so has every man in the world.

We insist on the same qualifications and *in the same way*; as do they who are called orthodox. We know that while we believe not with an holy heart, we shall be damned. We know that except we are born again, we cannot see the kingdom of God, are condemned already; and that the wrath of God abideth on us, unless we are united to Christ by regeneration and saving faith; and that except we repent we shall all assuredly perish. We insist on every medium, every qualification for heaven that ever was insisted on, by any pure gospel preacher. We have every motive to avoid all the ways of wickedness, and use all the means of grace and salvation that ever the renowned *Calvin* had. He believed that all the elect should infallibly be saved, and no more; so do I. He believed, God hath fixed and established the certain number, from all eternity, as immutably as his own being; so do I. And let men cavil as much as they please; there is but just one way to get rid of this doctrine; and that is to deny divine revelation, and the

necessary attributes of God. *Calvin* believed that Christ had undertaken to prepare all the elect for heaven, and would most certainly see the work done, in his own time and way ; so do I. He insisted on the necessity of the means of grace and salvation, and great propriety of them, and adduced the word of God, and all the reason and nature of things, to demonstrate that as a truth ; which he did beyond all rational contradiction ; so do I. His idea of heaven and hell was the self same as mine, as to the nature of the happiness and misery of each. I mention Mr. *Calvin* ; because his name and character are much known. I might unite with him, the great body of christian teachers since his day.

Now where is the difference between us, in the doctrine I plead for ? This, indeed gives a greater display, a more astonishing manifestation of the goodness of the great Father of all, than we have before admitted. The eternal, rich, free, sovereign love of the immense eternal source of love, breaks forth to our view, in more copious, and amazing floods. The triumph of grace is more glorious than heretofore, *in our sense of it* ; and gives our souls a most surprizing, adoring, rapturous shock, enough to make us break forth, " O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his determinations,* and his ways past finding out !" " For of him,

* κρίματα.

and through him, and to him are all things :
to whom be glory forever. Amen."

EVERY judicious reader will see, that the use of means cannot alter the case as to the salvation of the elect, any more on the common doctrine of predestination, than on this I plead for ; yet there is the greatest propriety in the use of appointed means. On both principles, the means and the end are inseparably connected, in the eternal gracious purpose of God.

UNTHINKING, unreasonable men have always been wont to tell those who were founded on the pure doctrines of free, sovereign grace, and who trusted all to God and nothing to themselves, and were thence led into pure and holy lives, lives of prayer, self denial, watchfulness, dying to the world, and all the vanities and carnal delights of it ; that if they themselves had such a belief of God's character, decrees and dealings with men, they would plunge into all manner of sinful pleasures, and would gratify every lust, in the highest degree. However, they who have indeed received this grace of God, have constantly affirmed that the greater sense they had of the infinite, eternal, immutable love of God to them, the more they loved him and all his holy laws : And the greater assurance they had that Christ died for them, the more they hated and abhorred all their sinfulness of nature and life, which nailed so dear a Savior to the cross : The more they realized their absolute safety in God alone, and the certainty of their perfe-

verance to the end, through the promises, grace, and faithfulness of Christ, the more they felt their hearts weaned from the world: The more spiritual and heavenly was the frame and temper of their minds, as they saw more of the vanity of themselves and of all creatures, and that God was all in all.

THE children of God have always spoken the truth in all this. And we can say the same, in answer to the same cavils of a blind world at enmity with God, and ignorant of his nature, which is love. Only we may add, that as we have more extensive views of the love of God, and the glorious harmony of all his attributes, in gathering together in one all things in Christ; so, we trust, it has a more powerful influence on our souls, of the same kind.

IF we really mistake concerning the extent of the merits, and salvation of the Savior of all men; it is at the farthest remove from a mistake, that affects the essentials of religion. It is only a wrong conjecture as to the number whom Christ will save, in one and the same way. There always have been different opinions among good people in this article. Some have been far more charitable than others, on this subject.

SOME, at this day, expect a millennium of three hundred and sixty five thousand years, i. e. a thousand prophetic years; in which long period almost all on earth shall be holy and happy. I was ever in this sentiment; and am full in it now. Yet many good peo-

ple, at the present day and for ages past, have said that they could find nothing in the word of God, but that the day of judgment might be in their day ; having no expectation at all of such a latter-day glory. Now, there is an almost infinite difference between the belief of these two, as to the extent of salvation ; yet both are in the same sure way to heaven, and on the same essential foundation. There is a much greater difference between those that have faith in a millennium, and those who have not, as to the number that shall be saved ; than there is between the advocates for the salvation of all men, and the former ; at least as to those that have already lived on the earth.

SUPPOSE you hear three pious christians discoursing on the doctrines of grace, and the way of salvation ; all in perfect agreement. At the close of the conversation, each gives his opinion with regard to the number, to be saved. One says, the way appears to him so exceeding strait, that he believes not more than one hundred thousand of all the human race, will ever get to heaven. Another says, he believes there will be more than one hundred thousand saved, but he is confident not a million. The third, having great faith in a millennium, and naturally somewhat unhappy in his talent at computation, is persuaded that there will be more of the human race saved, than there are single atoms of matter in this whole globe of earth. You would not imagine that either was in an error, in any

thing that concerned his own salvation. From a good acquaintance with human nature, you would only infer, that the first was naturally a man of a narrow soul and stingy temper of mind; that the second was, in these respects, not so unhappy; and that the last was rather inattentive in his computations; but that they might be all in the same way to heaven. And, indeed, if a great sense of the *free, sovereign* grace of God, leads men into vice and immorality, *how comes it to pass*, as always appears to be fact, *that they who have the highest sense of this, have ever been men of the purest lives?*

IF I understand the gospel to be glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, in the common natural sense of language; and another understands the same words to mean glad tidings to a few people of all sorts, and very sad tidings to the bulk of mankind, as being a sure occasion of enhancing their eternal misery in an awful degree: Yet, if I have gospel qualifications to relish and enjoy heaven, I shall go there; and so will he in the same way. For we both agree in the necessity of the same work on our souls, without which there is no salvation for any. I insist on these qualifications, as flowing from a previous all-sufficient atonement made for all sinners of the human race, and as necessary to give me sense and enjoyment of the benefit of that atonement, to which Christ has given me a previous title. He insists on these qualifi-

cations to make out his title for him, instead of taking it solely from Christ, and as sealed in his blood alone. I believe that, while we were yet enemies, Christ died for the ungodly, and secured them for life eternal, as a Priest; and then goes on, as a Prophet and King, to enlighten and subdue them, and make them know the things freely given them of God. I put the atonement at the bottom, the death of Christ as the chief corner stone, and build all upon that. He supposes the sacrifice of Christ not to be the foundation of all our hope; but when we have got good previous qualifications, then we may make great advantage of it, and bring it in somewhere in the building, though not at the bottom of all, Christ the *only foundation*. Both of us agree in this, that the greater sense and experience of God's free grace we have, the more we shall love and serve God; and that the love of God, or God in his character, which is LOVE, is the only principle that constraineth us to love God, and live an holy life, or that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance.

THE general aspect of the *limitarian principles*, is, that a very few, in comparison with the whole of mankind, shall ever be saved; and, indeed, that but a very small part, even of those people that enjoy divine revelation, will escape eternal, personal damnation; and a far less number, in proportion, among all heathen nations. On this principle, the gospel is by no means

glad tidings of great joy which shall be unto *all people*, in any common, natural sense of language : But to people and nations, as such, it is very *bad news*, *doleful tidings* to any nation or people, in a collective view, as they are plainly addressed in the text, to which I allude.

TAKE, for example, the inhabitants of the United States, as a people. More than nine tenths of them, the *limitarians* suppose, are, at the present day, going to eternal destruction ; and that a very great majority of all that ever lived here, are now in the intolerable flames of an eternal hell, with torments aggravated more than ten thousand-fold beyond what they would have been, had they never heard the gospel. How then are the tidings glad tidings to the people, as such ? They are plainly declared as such every where in the voice of the gospel. Yet upon this plan, the people will be far more miserable than if they had never heard the gospel. Suppose one out of an hundred is saved, which is as many as the general aspect of the *limitarian* doctrine will admit ; or, if you please, suppose ten among a hundred, which is going quite beyond the charity of the doctrine : You must still allow that all the rest are ten thousand times more miserable, and will be so to all eternity, than if they had never heard the gospel. So that the people, as such, and as they are plainly addressed with good news, GLAD TIDINGS, will be found far more miserable than if they had never heard these tidings. Thus

the gospel becomes glad tidings only to a very few individuals ; but dreadful tidings to any people, or all people, as such.

A SOVEREIGN prince has a colony consisting of one million subjects. All much on a level, laboring under the toils and burdens which attend a people, that eat their bread in the sweat of their face, struggling hard for a comfortable provision for themselves and families. The common lot in this evil world. The king sends an herald to assemble them all together, and to address them in the following words :

“ BEHOLD I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all this people. For it is the immutable decree of your sovereign, that a few of you shall be delivered from all your toils and labors, and shall be exceedingly rich and happy all their days, abounding in every possible pleasure and delight. And that all the rest of you shall be inexpressibly more miserable and distressed all their days, than ever they have been. Their labors, toils and vexation shall be increased more than a thousand fold. Your sovereign will mark the happy few with a distinction, which his own hand and no other can set upon them ; and the multitude, not so marked, shall forever find their woes amazingly augmented.”

Would not the colony, the people, be filled with horror at the tidings, and think the news exceedingly sorrowful ? Would it not be much happier for that colony, as a people, to live as they did before ;

though many toils and troubles attended them?

Now, should the herald proceed to name the happy few, perhaps one in a thousand; and the multitude of their brethren should see them rejoicing and triumphing in the sovereign distinction, by the free grace of their prince; would they not say that this very joy and triumph was all founded in pride and selfishness, and a total want of benevolence to the community? And should those favorites cry out glad tidings! glad tidings! would not the wailing multitude answer, "*To you glad tidings they may be; but not to the people. The colony is ruined; the people are undone, undone forever!*" And if these few favorites of their sovereign had that amiable spirit of benevolence, which adorns human nature, and is one of the glories of the gospel, would they not rather chuse to return to a level with their brethren, and partake with them in common, in all troubles and calamities as before, than to be thus singled out for dignity, glory, and pleasure, when necessarily connected with such augmented woe and misery to the people?

THE case now stated, applies to the gospel tidings, on the *limitarian* plan. A few, very few that hear them, are made happy. All the rest are much more dreadfully miserable on account of Christ and the gospel. This is fixed by the immutable purpose of heaven, with all the means, and every step leading to the consummation of it,

I HOLD to the doctrine of predestination as fully as any man in the world ever did, and that in the supra-lapsarian sense, which is the only consistent sense. The absolute sovereignty of JEHOVAH I maintain, in the highest possible conception of it. But, it will abundantly appear, in its proper place, that JEHOVAH is not a God whose attributes and sovereign will can admit of such a predestination as that; such decrees as I have alluded to. God is love, infinite love, sovereign love; and such love admits of no such *limitarian* decrees; and the word of God abhors them, as you shall see in the sequel.

It is an evidence of the true gospel, that there is no contradiction in it. Every sentiment in it, is in full concord with the whole.

A SERMON is not made up of contradictory parts, if it be wholly a gospel sermon. Now, the doctrine I plead for, is the only plan that ever was exhibited, as consistent with itself. The arminian scheme is full of inconsistencies. See what the late president *Edwards* has made of it; and he has demonstration on his side. Many other great men have opposed it with the same force. The calvinistic scheme, in the *limitarian* sense, is every whit as *full of contradiction* and absurdity; as hath often been objected, with arguments that admit of no confutation. The same may be said of all the rest that ever have been advanced in the world, except this alone. But this has not the

shadow of inconsistency with itself. If it be a mere hypothesis, it is a self-consistent one.

ON this plan, you may hold up to view the true nature and character of God : That of man in innocency : That of man fallen : The first and second covenant : Give JEHOVAH his proper place, and man his place : Speak of a work of God on the souls of sinners, as necessary to their salvation : Shew them that without this work they are damned, condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on them : Tell them what Christ hath engaged, what he hath done and suffered, and for what end ; and what he will certainly do : Command all sinners to believe it, on pain of abiding damnation : Tell them the warrant and ground of their faith : That they are not commanded to create truth, or in the least alter it, by all the changes and exercises of their own minds ; but that eternal, immutable truth is ready to their hands, and, by mere faith, they must take hold of it and be saved : That this is the way, in Christ, sure as Godhead can make it : That Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, &c. &c.

As this doctrine relates to practice, you may urge every moral duty, with infinite force, from motives truly evangelical ; holding up the pains of sin, and the beauties and rewards of holiness, all in most glorious harmony.

THE doctrine we have generally heard from our best preachers, since the reformation, hath been of this tenor, viz. " God

" hath elected to eternal life a part of man-
 " kind, and Christ made an atonement for
 " that part only." And they have commonly
 conveyed the idea of a very small part, in
 proportion to the whole. " Which part are
 " elected to the end, and to all the necessary
 " means and qualifications; which God will
 " infallibly bestow upon them in his own
 " way and time. All the rest of mankind
 " shall as certainly perish, and that justly,
 " the fault being all their own. Now we
 " invite, and command every one to believe
 " in Christ to salvation, every one alike:
 " For in him there is a fulness for all." A
 thousand arguments have been advanced to
 prove there is no inconsistency, no kind of
 equivocation, or illusion in this way of
 preaching; but that it is the pure simplicity
 of the gospel: While it hath always been
 clear demonstration, on the other hand, that
 there is great duplicity and illusion in it.
 Yet this preaching is exactly right, in every
 point but this one; *the extent of predestination*.
 Only extend it to all the human kind. Only
 define the decree in the words of the apostle;
 " *God will have all men to be saved.*" " *As sin*
hath reigned unto death, so shall grace reign
through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus
Christ our Lord." Many other express de-
 clarations of divine revelation, of the same
 import, are as simple and express to the same
 purpose, as any language will admit. I say,
 thus explain the decrees of God; and all
 their preaching would be as free from incon-
 sistency as any mathematical demonstration.

ONLY begin thus, in the plain, simple sense of the words ; “ *Christ came that all men through him might be saved.*” Tell people that this is the eternal fixed predestination of the Most High ; and that all means and qualifications are connected with it, in the same decree, and made as sure as the end, to take place in his own way and time ; yet so as to have the free will and actions of his elect, concerned in them, as moral agents and causes by counsel ; which is the only possible way of connecting the intermediate steps with the end. Tell your audience so, I say, and then in all the rest, you may preach law and gospel just as *Calvin* or *Owen* did, or any other calvinistic divine. Then you may indeed proclaim *Glad tidings of great joy to ALL PEOPLE* ; and may urge every gospel doctrine, duty and motive, just as we have been wont to hear, without the shadow of contradiction. Then you may call upon all poor, miserable sinners as Paul did. He told them all, that Christ had began his operation in their souls, as Mediator, and would perfect the whole work unto eternal life ; dealing with moral agents *as such*, in which the will and activity should have their proper exercise. “ Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” On this plan the gospel is plain and clear : And the usual preaching of it, is consistent with itself and with common sense.

IF any say here, that the use of means is of no consideration, if the end is fixed and certain ; they speak in direct opposition to this idea of the decrees of God, and the whole scripture account of them, which ever unites the means and end, in one and the same decree ; and against all the common sense and common practice of mankind. Every one that owns the being of God, allows that he *certainly knew* every thing that ever did or shall take place ; and that every future event shall certainly be just as God always knew it would be. But this never hinders their using means, in common life. Nothing can be more certain, than that which God always knew would be, is certain. Whatever distinction there is between the foreknowledge and decrees of God ; every one sees there can be none in the object, the infallible certainty of the event. Yet there is full room left for all moral agency to operate, with all the liberty that any creature can possibly be made capable of.

If any say, there can be no moral agency at all in creatures ; this is a flat contradiction to all the common sense and feeling of man. We all know our perfect freedom of will and action ; not by any reasoning or demonstration : For it is too plain to admit of any. It is a prime, immediate perception of soul, which we always have, and constantly feel, and cannot possibly divest ourselves of : Even as I feel heat or cold ; or perceive that paper is white, and ink black ; or that whatever is, is ; or that a thing can-

not exist and exist at the same time. So that I have ever imagined that such a senseless cavil is worthy of no notice at all.

BUT to return. The gospel, on the ground I maintain, is all consistent with itself, with common sense and reason, and with universal experience, and with the best reasoning and practice of all mankind in every other matter. We always unite the proper means with the end, in all other cases ; and there is no other way for moral agents to be treated, as such, and to act in proper character. Creatures are creatures, although God is God.

THERE is a sentiment, or impression, on the hearts of all men, concerning the dead, that universally favors the argument here advanced.

WHEN the vilest sinner in the world is taken out of it, by the most sudden death, we dare not say, and it would wound our hearts to hear any one say, "*that person is certainly gone to an eternal hell, to suffer there in person forever.*" Who dare say of the most abandoned sailor, having his head taken off with a cannon ball, with an horrid oath in his mouth, "*I am certain that man shall burn forever in hell?*" Yet we might say so, with great confidence, on the principle I oppose. Had you, my reader, a son of this character, thus taken out of the world, would you be so deeply affected, in regard to his eternal doom, as if you certainly knew he was in hell ? Or had you a son very dear to you,

even as Absalom was to his father, and of a character to the last moment no better, taken out of the world by the hand of justice; would not the circumstances of his death strike your mind deeper, than any certain knowledge you have of his future state? You may say the future state of men is invisible, and we have no business with it. Be it so. Yet, would it be in the power of any man to avoid the most dreadful anguish of soul, in such a case, but from a *latent hope* in his heart, arising from the power and mercy of God? Would not any man in the world, feel more anguish of heart to see his son hanged as a criminal, than what he ever can feel with respect to his future state, separate from the circumstances of his death? If we have no business with the invisible world in such a case, yet this does not alter the necessary and unavoidable feelings of human nature.

I AM persuaded that any man, who has buried a dear child, in a case which is thought the most hopeless of all, will find, if he is critical to observe the feelings of his own heart, some *latent* assuaging of his grief, in thinking of the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the almighty power and infinite mercy of God. Have we not often observed much of this nature, in mourning for the dead, even in cases that would admit of nothing but absolute desperation, on the *limitarian* plan? Despair, in this case, never takes place. There is something in the soul of man that will not admit of it. What

but the hand of Deity has fixed in the hearts of all mankind this latent hope, in every death ?

ALL the pungent pangs of David for the death of Absalom, may be fully accounted for, on the principles of natural affection, without any consideration of his future state. Any tender parent would feel as he did, in the like case, without looking into futurity.

It is exceedingly strange, on the *limitarian* plan, that the scriptures have never asserted that any particular person went to an eternal hell.

THE state of no one, perhaps, is more hopeless than that of Judas, who betrayed Christ the Savior of all men ; yet not a word is said of him but what may consist with his salvation after death. He is called the son of perdition ; and it is said that he went to his own place. All this is but just what we may say of every sinner, in kind, though of Judas in a very aggravated degree. Every man is a son of perdition until new born, damned until regenerated. Judas was a notable son of perdition, signally so, a most miserable, lost, condemned sinner, until his death ; in perdition until that moment, even until soul and body were separated ; until then a son of perdition in an extraordinary degree. Paul was so in a woful measure until he died, “ *a wretched man,*” with a “ *body of death.*” Every man is so, in a sad degree, until the union of soul and body, which first contaminated the soul, is dissol-

ved; some in a greater, and some in a less degree, according as the Head of every man, i. e. the Mediator, has been pleased to advance, or restrain his prophetic and kingly power and grace upon the soul.

JUDAS went to his own place, to a very horrible and ignominious death, in awful anguish and utter despair, in his own mind. His soul went, perhaps, to the lowest seat provided for the elect human race, by him who died for the sins of the whole world; to the lowest place among all given to Christ. Judas being one given to Christ, as is expressly declared. Judas was lost in an awful manner; he was lost as an apostle of Christ; lost as to all service in this world; lost with regard to all his comfort on earth; lost as to any hope to support his own soul here; lost with respect to the proper seat of one of the twelve apostles in the world to come, and with respect to that dignified lot, in this world, which Matthias took in his place. He was, in fine, so lost, such a son of perdition, and in such wise went to his own place, as fully to support and justify the most plain and natural import of all the awful things said in the word of God concerning him; without any consideration of positive misery, after death. The same may be said of Ahitophel his type.

WITH regard to the parable of the rich man, in the gospel, who lift up his eyes in hell, being in torments. It implies no personal misery there; but is one of the many striking displays of *pure justice*, the sanction

of the law, in awful terror. Such displays will remain forever, as I have said before, in the full view of all the saints in heaven to all eternity. In the glass of pure justice, they will forever see, not only this Dives, but themselves also lifting up their eyes in torments unutterable. And, in this sense, will dwell with devouring fire, and inhabit everlasting burnings. Though in their surety, they shall personally find a place of defence, a munition of rocks, the bread and sure waters of eternal consolation.

I READILY grant, if this distinction, which I would every where keep in view, between the voice of justice, and that of mercy, the display of law and that of gospel, running through the whole word of God, is without foundation, my whole argument falls to the ground. So does the whole of divine revelation, for ought I can possibly discern, after a most careful inquiry, for many years. And (with awful reverence I would speak it,) I am not able, without this distinction, to vindicate the holy bible from many more flat contradictions, than any other book I have ever read. But this distinction is the peculiar glory and mystery of divine revelation.

WE are expressly told, that even a brother for whom Christ died, may *perish*. 1. Cor. viii. 11. This is a term used for eternal misery, by the *limitarians* themselves, as much as the word *damnation*. The meaning is certainly no more than this: He may fall into snares of infidelity, into many doubts and sorrows in this world; may lose all gospel

consolation, and become a miserable creature, all his days on earth.

MOREOVER, what our Savior hath said concerning children, greatly confirms the opinion, that he gave his life "a ransom for all," in the most natural sense of these words of the apostle.

THE greater part of departed human souls have left the body, having never arrived at the age of maturity. Christ tells us, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." Plainly signifying, that a great proportion for whom he died, are of this description. And he does not at all limit his words to the children of his peculiar people, in present knowledge of his covenant, and present enjoyment of the privileges and comforts of it. This shews that he is the Mediator between God and man, in general, without any exception or distinction as to final salvation.

THE passage I have alluded to, may also carry in it this idea, viz. That all who enjoy heaven, have a meek, humble, dependent, child-like spirit given them. This may be one thing signified thereby; but this militates not in the least against the construction I have given, as the main import of the words of Christ; but is compatible therewith, and the rather confirms it. We hope for the salvation of children of the covenant, dedicated to God by his special seal. The same merits of Christ, and the same power of sanctifying grace, are as adequate to the salvation of all the little ones in the world.

We all fell in our first fœderal head, without our knowledge or act in the case; and all mankind are restored in the second fœderal head in like manner. Otherwise grace does not abound *much more*; but indeed *much less*. This idea of the kind Parent of all, gives us a father's consolation when we follow to the grave our dear children, who are often swept away by death in such multitudes. Read Jeremiah xxxi. 15, 16, 17. We can yet say, "the Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all." No infant in the world was ever exempt from the mediatorial love of him, who *took little children in his arms and blessed them*.

MUCH is said about being fit to die. There is one fitness and but one, and that is by no means personal; but in the perfect character of a Covenant Head, a Vicar, or Surety, in the full atonement, and all perfect worthiness of Jesus. Whatever difference progressive grace may make between mankind in this life, (and great is the blessing of all those who are elected to special attainments of grace in this world) yet every one without distinction, is left utterly unfit for heaven, so long as the soul is in the body, an awful unclean thing. No unclean thing shall enter into that world. On the separation, and not before, is any soul in its own temper and qualifications fit; but in a relative view, all for whom Christ died, are so. Their garments are all alike washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

What was done for David, Daniel and Paul, at the moment of separation, that they might enter paradise with spotless purity, was of the self-same nature, and not twice so much in degree, as might qualify Pharaoh, Ahab, and Judas for the same world: For no man on earth, to his last breath, was ever yet sanctified to the one half, or ever made progress in holiness one half way from a state of total depravity, to a state of complete holiness.

My reader if you are left as you are found at your last breath, you must know that your soul will be too unclean for heaven, or else you know very little of yourself. In Christ, all things are ready for all, and equally ready at all times, without any consideration in the universe, but what is drawn from God alone in a glorious, all sufficient Mediator. God is all in all, and Christ is all in all. Thus the primitive preachers of Christ warned *every man*, and taught *every man*, in all wisdom: That they might present *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Col. i. And I am bold to say, that any child of Adam that trusts to any distinction in his own heart or life, in the least to support the heart in a dying hour, or to any thing but Jesus Christ alone and him crucified, *shall be all his life time subject to bondage through fear of death*; and, thus abiding, shall find no relief, until the departed spirit is taught better, in the arms of him who has the keys of hell and of death. The notion of some fitness in a sinner for heaven, whether a penitent or an impenitent sinner, is utterly re-

pugnant to the whole word of God. It is built wholly on a legal spirit, and on our attachment to the old covenant of works. It wars against every evangelical motive of comfort in our souls, and obedience in our lives. It stands in opposition to an entire dependance on God in Christ, and to every moral virtue. Hence we do not allow God his proper character and place, nor take our own : “ We observe lying vanities and forsake our own mercies.”

IT is an evidence of the true gospel : That when it is impressed on the heart, it makes men better in their morals than before.

THE *limitarians* urge this argument against all the cavils raised from the doctrines of God's decrees, of free sovereign grace, and of the certain perseverance of believers. And they have ever well maintained their ground, by dint of reason, experience and divine revelation. The doctrine I plead for, takes full advantage of every argument they adduce, and enforces them all with vast additional strength. They say, and that truly, that the displays of God's mercy and love, always draw the heart to love God, and to keep his commandments. How much more shall these more glorious and extensive displays of the love and mercy of God, in the self same way, melt the whole soul into the obedience of love, and produce every moral virtue in the life of man ?

THE question is not, what will be the influence of this doctrine on those who do not

believe it, but on those who do? We know that every gospel doctrine is turned to bad account, by impenitent, unbelieving men. They all turn the grace of God into wantonness; while true believers are purified by their faith, and led into all holiness of life. There is not one objection of licentiousness against this doctrine, which does not lie, in full force, and much greater force, against every *limitarian* doctrine of *free, sovereign grace*.

THEY who have built on the highest principles of sovereign grace, and have most of all set at nought all fitness in men for salvation, but in Christ alone, have ever been the most moral and virtuous in their lives: While, on the other hand, they who could not endure a thought of the absolute decrees and sovereignty of God, and salvation by mere mercy in Christ, exclusive from every qualification in man, to move the heart of God towards him; and have plead for power and merit and free will of their own creating, have too often been a dissolute, abandoned part of mankind. The higher thoughts men have of God, and the lower of themselves; the better their morals always have been, and always will be. Therefore, as this doctrine, which I am supporting, carries these sentiments to a much greater extent than any *limitarian* doctrine: So it will, if cordially believed, produce much better morals.

The *fear of punishment* after death, never

yet had any power to restrain an hardened sinner from sin ; much less to make him love virtue.

THE most abandoned in wickedness, in all ages, have believed in the doctrine of hell torments, as much as a hardened sinner can believe any thing of the invisible world. They have always been wont to allude to these torments, in their common conversation, as a matter indisputable. They have hell and damnation in their mouths, all the day long. But did all this ever, in the least, prevent their stealing, cursing, swearing, committing adultery, fighting with one another, or any horrid blasphemy they were addicted to ? Never in the least. Now if any imagine the most extensive doctrines of divine goodness will make hardened sinners worse than they now are ; they have yet to study human nature, and the common ways of the world.

GIVE an old, veteran, profane sailor, a guinea in some special distress he is in, and he will not use a bad word if he knows it will offend you. But threaten him with eternal damnation for his sin, and tell him his present distress is just upon him, and he will curse you to your face. Men ought indeed, to be deterred from sin by fear of hell : For hell in an awful degree and the pains of it attend all sin ; and the eternity of hell torments can be avoided in no way, but by forsaking sin, no more on my plan than any other. But *ought* is one thing, and *fact* is another. Whatever hardened

finners ought to do, and from whatever motives ; I say, it is fact in all ages, the world throughout, that they never did mend their ways, from a fear of any thing in the invisible world. It has ever been fact, that when they have had most of hell and damnation in their mouths, they have gone on most daringly in their wickedness.

It is readily granted, that awakened sinners, with whom the spirit of God is on his usual way to bring them to a sense of the salvation of God, will be much restrained from all immorality, under such special awakenings ; yet all these will not bring them into the love and practice of holiness and virtue, as will a sense of the love of God's redeeming love. Under all these legal awakenings and restraints from open vice, *they will only change their mode of sinning, until the grace of God that bringeth salvation, appears to their souls : Which alone will effectually teach them to deny all ungodliness and every worldly lust.* But then, let it be well noted that the doctrine I plead for, secures every advantage and restraint of awakening grace, as fully as any *limitarian* doctrine ever did, or can. I maintain the same doctrine in the true nature of it ; the same necessity of conviction and conversion, that they do. We differ not a single atom, as to the way and manner of application ; but only in this, I extend the glorious work of God, and every good influence of it, much further than they do.

FROM visible, sensible shame and punish-

ment, in this world, the hardened and most abandoned are laid under very great restraints, without which they would be wholly intolerable ; but none, none at all, from all you can tell them of an eternal hell. As for these visible restraints, none can plead for them more than I ; as will appear in its proper place. It may however be observed, that all the conduct of sinners, under the utmost power of their restraints, is wholly destitute of any holiness, or real virtue in the sight of God. Their open sin in the sight of the world, is much less than before ; and there is a good token, that the spirit of God is on his usual way to bring them to saving good. There are reasons enough in opposition to stupid security and open wickedness : Yet, still the soul of one unregenerate sinner is no more recommended in itself to the mercy of God, than that of another. This mercy is " unto all, and upon all them that believe ; for there is no difference." Rom. iii. 22. Antecedently there is not a disposition, or thought of the heart, or action in the life, but what is not of faith ; and consequently sin.

THE view of divine love, of Christ and salvation, as is here represented, is the true and only source of *gospel charity*, so much recommended in the word of God.

WE are taught to love all mankind, and to pray for the salvation of all, and to do all we can to promote the salvation of every human creature ; as the gospel hath ever

been, is, and ever will be preached to every creature under heaven, in a more direct and clear, or in a more indirect and obscure manner, as I have shewn before. But how can you pray for the salvation of all, if you believe it is the fixed will of that God, whose attributes and will are infinitely dear to you, that most of mankind shall go to eternal, personal misery? You love God better than men, and his will more than all the happiness of creatures; how can you feel any disposition to have all men saved? And how can you pray in opposition to the desire of your heart? Or how can you love all mankind when you believe that most are infinitely hateful to God and Christ, and always shall be? How do your will and affections correspond with the will and affections of Christ in such a case?

You are strictly charged to hate nothing in any man, but his sinfulness; *to love the person and happiness of every one.* You may hate the wicked with perfect hatred, only as God does, and as David did, accounting them the enemies of God, i. e. so far as they are so. And thus far, and in this sense, you may hate all present believers, and even your father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea and your own self also. This is consistent with a sincere love to your own salvation, and that of all mankind. But, how can you desire that blessedness and extent of salvation, which the highest object of your love opposeth, with an eternal, immutable, holy, and good pur-

pose of mind ? I see no way to warrant such desires, exertions and prayers of ours in all this extent, but the warrant Paul hath mentioned, viz. *God will have all men to be saved*, and, first or last, in his own way and time, to come to the knowledge of the truth ; and because Christ *gave himself a ransom for all* : A glorious truth to be communicated to the world by degrees, as infinite wisdom sees fit : A testimony to be exhibited in proper times and measures. On this warrant, the way is open and clear, to love all ; to pray for all ; to seek the salvation of all ; to exercise kind and tender affection for all poor sinners in the world ; because God hath so loved the world, and Christ hath so loved the world.

THE love of God will make us love all as he does, according to our measure of love, and to be co-workers together with God. A principle of this nature moves tender affection in all other cases. You have a very dear, earthly friend, that is absent afar off, who has left a little child with you. The remembrance of your friend, and how he set his affections on that child, and what tender concern he continually has for the child, will affect your heart with tenderness, pity and love, every time you look on the little helpless creature ; even though it be, a perverse child. The love of your most dear friend, will make you always exceeding kind to his child, as an object of his love. Your care will extend to his other property, less

valuable, which you have any concern with, or knowledge of. So, in the present case, when you see any poor, perverse sinners on earth, your love to God and Christ will cause your heart, on the true gospel principle, to say, "My God made them in his love; and in his great love and pity he preserves them. My dear Savior died for them, in the greatness of his love. God hath a desire to these works of his hands. The heart of my best beloved even bleeds with compassion, love and pity to these poor creatures. My love to my Savior makes me feel towards these unworthy, miserable objects, as he doth. He is exceedingly good to these evil, unthankful creatures; and the love of God constraineth me to feel towards them, as God and Christ do towards them and me." There is verily no other fountain of gospel charity but this: No other principle that can make us feel towards the vilest of sinners, as God commands us. But this "charity believeth all things, and hopeth all things," certainly not excluding the capital point. This charity is the radical grace in the soul of man, and "the bond of perfectness."

SOME, who have been full in the opinion, that Christ the Savior of the world, will finally triumph over all the power of Satan, and all the sins and miseries of mankind, wholly destroying all the works of the devil, seeking and saving that human nature which was lost; have yet supposed, that pain and misery may attend many of the human race,

a long duration after death ; even for ages of ages.* This they suppose necessary, to purge, humble, and subdue some sinners ; and make them fit for a pure spotless heaven, a pure state of consummate happiness.

THE above sentiment is without any reason, or any thing in divine revelation to warrant the supposition. All want purgation at the moment of death, as really as any one. Sanctification is far, very far from being complete, while the sinner breathes, whether a penitent or impenitent sinner. In both there is much unholiness, while life remains. No unclean thing shall enter heaven ; and, of certain consequence, not the best saint, not any mere man that ever lived, as he was in the last moment of his life.

WHATEVER is done before, for us miserable sinners, it is certain, the most of all will be done in the parting moment, to separate us from pollution, and fit us for glory. All then must go into purgation, if any : Though it were granted that a shorter period would suffice for some than for others ; which is not true, as will soon appear. Hence the papists are quite consistent with themselves, though not with the gospel, in sending all to purgatory ; without a decree of exemption, which, they say, is the pardon of the priest.

A SPECIAL work of Christ there certainly must be in death ; or never one of the mere human kind can get to heaven : For the ve-

* εἰς τὴν αἰῶνα τῶν αἰῶνων.

ry moment before we expire, the best do justly cry out. O wretched men that we are ; we have a body of death, and who shall deliver us from it ! We shall all be poor, wretched sinners in that moment, whenever it comes, and under greater guilt than, than ever before, in ourselves considered : For we shall continually add many sins, and atone for none. The same infinite mercy, power, and faithfulness, which can then separate one soul from all its unfitness for heaven, can another. Christ does but a small part of his glorious work on any soul in this life. He graciously begins earlier with some than others ; but he finishes with all alike, even at death. “ The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. I will make this last even as thee.”

WE are very plainly taught in the word of God, that every soul goes immediately after death, into an eternal, fixed state ; which never more admits of any alteration, but in progressive degree ; the same in kind, unchangeable to endless duration. The special manner in which Enoch and Elijah went out of the world, does not make them differ from that of all mankind in this respect ; viz. That they were both so far from perfect holiness, the moment before their translation, as to be utterly unfit for the pure glories of heaven. Yea, they were much more fit for hell, *in themselves*, as neither they, nor any other man had ever arrived half way to sinless perfection while in the body. Yet, it is sure, they both went direct to heaven. The thief on the cross was miserably unprepared

for paradise, as long as he was dying; but when dead, he went there, with the human soul of Jesus. Lazarus went as directly to that world when he died, as the rich man went, *in the voice of the law*, to hell, and as all go there, when they die, *in the same holy sentiment of the law*. Paul desired to depart, not for some AGES of purgation and humiliation, but to be with Christ; although he groaned under his body of death, more than under the dying pangs of his body. And there is every reason to prove, that all the redeemed sinners, for whom Christ gave himself a ransom, shall go there as immediately after death, as the poor, hateful thief.

WE are taught the same truth, from the early periods of divine revelation. All the uncleannesses mentioned in the mosaïc institution, and all the purgations there, represent, as all allow, our moral or spiritual pollutions, and our moral or spiritual cleansing. A day there denotes oftentimes the day or season of life, and the evening, death, or the close of life. How many times is it repeated, that the polluted and the unclean, in a ceremonial sense, though they wash their cloaths and bathe themselves in water, (denoting all the means of grace and sanctification in this life) yet shall be unclean until the even? But it is said of all sowing seeds, in like cases, that they shall be clean. Levit. xi. And in many other places, needless here to quote. Seed sown and springing up again, is a well known simile, denoting our death and resurrection. "It is sown a natu-

ral body, it is raised a spiritual body." So in the type alluded to, we die most dreadfully unclean; yet no unsafe consequence shall follow, any more than it was unsafe to sow polluted seed, for fear the pollution would not be taken out in the ground, and that the rising crop would be all unclean.

THE human body goes into the grave an awfully polluted thing; but does not arise so. It is sown in dishonor and weakness, it is raised in honor and glory. Our bones will be full of the sin of our youth, which will be buried together with us in the dust; but will not arise with us, except in the holy voice of law: And in that sense all mankind shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt, and abide so forever; but in gospel language and *certain effect*, all shall awake to everlasting life. Sin lies down, but does not arise. "His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust." Job xx. Sin and its attendants shall vex and distress the wicked as long as they live; and hurry them on in all its dreadful rage and malignity while they live. It shall even drive them to death, "to the king of terrors;" but no further.

THE utmost torment, for a long period, even for *ages of ages*, could have no more effect in humbling sinners of the human, than of the angelic nature. The devils are no better, for their long continued anguish and pain. Afflictions in this world, do not make sinners any better; but are invariably, only an occasion of their growing worse and

worse, if the special, almighty energy of the divine Spirit does not attend them. There is not the least intimation of the operation of the Spirit of God, or of any means of grace in hell; in whatever sense any understand that awful state, whether as a state of real, personal suffering, or as the pure voice or display of justice. The devils have been under these personal sufferings, for a long time, and are no more humble than ever, no more fit for heaven. And had it been the decree of God, that all mankind should be there in person with them, ever so long, they would grow worse and worse, through all ages of ages; for ought that their intolerable torments would do for them. Almighty power could create their hearts anew, even in hell, as easily as on earth. God has power enough to change the natures of all the devils there; but, he has not told us he ever will do it, and we know of no favor provided for them, or that ever will be.

UNTO us a Savior is born; unto us God's own Son is given; and he has been pleased to make known to us his decrees of infinite love and mercy. The love and kindness of God to man hath appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, or can do; but by his mere mercy he saves man, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed on us, on all mankind abundantly; though on different persons and people, and in different ages and periods of

time, in a very different degree, as the great and holy Sovereign hath seen fit.

UPON the true, gospel doctrine, that God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth: That the Lamb of God hath taken away the sin of the whole world: That Christ is invested with regal power, as Mediator, to gather together in one all things in himself: That as far as sin hath reigned unto death, grace shall reign through righteousness to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord: And that the last enemy he will destroy is death, crying in exalted triumph, O death! I will be thy plague: O grave! I will be thy destruction: On this plain gospel doctrine, I say, it is wholly without reason or scripture, to suppose that the miseries of man shall reach beyond death.

THE contest between the Mediator and his grand adversary, or the two opposite seeds, is very often, and very justly represented under the similitude of a long war, or a long, obstinate battle. It is every where affirmed that the Savior of the human race shall obtain the victory, and a full complete victory too. The adversary shall succeed no further than to bruise the heel; which is not a wound that shall terminate in that death, *everlasting, personal death*, which he aimed at. It shall admit of a cure. But the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the adversary; give a fatal stroke, where a bruise by almighty strength is certain death; and

so far as we know, it will admit of no cure. Such will be the victory of Christ over the serpent.

WHEN two armies go to battle, if the one, only with the loss of an hundred men, slay ten thousand of the adverse party and take almost all the rest prisoners with great spoil; we say there is a great and triumphant victory gained; yea, we are ready to call it a complete triumph, even though the victors lose a few men in battle, and a few more are taken captives by the retreating foe. Just such will be the victory of Satan, upon the *limitarian* plan. The rescued of the Lord will be only a very few, amidst the general overthrow of mankind. Satan will obtain a great and awful victory, though not so intricate and complete as he could have wished: Not wholly without loss; but almost so. Now is this like the representation of the rencounter, the great contest, in which the Almighty Son of God hath engaged against his adversary, and the grand adversary of his dear offspring of the human kind?

THE point Satan aimed at, was to involve us all in death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. Christ set himself in full opposition to the whole purpose of Satan, that no evil, *none at all* on the whole, should accrue to man from all the malice, and all the deadly works of the devil. Christ's aim was as extensive as Satan's; as good as the devil's was bad. HE UNDERTOOK WITH AS MUCH

BENEVOLENCE, AS SATAN DID WITH MA-

LICE. He aimed at no partial victory, much less at a rescue of a very few, leaving the field and a triumphant victory to his adversary.

THE Mediator, the Head of every man abundantly assures us, that his victory shall be complete. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death! I will be thy plagues; O grave! I will be thy destruction: Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." Hof. xiii. 14. So in Heb. ii. we find the union of Christ with human nature, *with every man*, as fully asserted as words can express; together with the end of his undertaking, and of all his sufferings. "That he by the grace of God should taste death *for every man*;" and "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil;" and "that he might deliver them (without any exception mentioned) who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage:" Which is most of all the case of poor, distressed sinners, who under conviction, feel themselves, of all mankind, the least qualified for heaven, and the most fit for hell: Indeed, all other sinners also, tremble at a realizing thought of death. The great Redeemer speaks without any, the least exception, when he says, "shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord, even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will

contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children." Itai. xlix. 24, 25.

THE Holy Ghost speaks of man without any distinction, in words like these: "His soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers; if there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." Job xxxiii. Here it is most plain, that the discovery, interpretation, or display of the Mediator's *own righteousness* is the sole relief of the guilty, without any the least qualification or distinction in the sinful creature.

THE holy scriptures every where abound with thoughts correspondent to the passages now cited. There is nothing that looks like a victory of satan over the Son of man, in any part or degree; though it is well known, the whole human kind are the prize contended for. All is quite the reverse. Christ rideth forth conquering and to conquer. "He hath led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, yea for the *rebellious* also, that the Lord our God might dwell among them." Psalm lxviii. "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell; and (having made peace, through the blood of his cross) *by him*, to reconcile all things to himself, *by him*, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head

bodily ; and ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power.” “ Blotting out the hand writing of ordinances, which was against us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross ; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” Col. i. and ii. The holy scriptures every where announce, not only some benefit to mankind by Christ, a small, partial rescue from misery ; some valuable saving to the human kind ; but a redemption, a victory over *fatan*, *death*, and *mifery*, FULL, COMPLETE, and ETERNAL.

IT is utterly impertinent for any one to say, that this victory may be so complete, and yet most of the human race, or indeed any of them, may be in personal misery to endless duration : And that God may have his own full glory, and the most benevolent system may be established, notwithstanding. We must attend to the very thing contended for by *fatan*, on the one part, and by the Son of God on the other. On the part of the adversary, the matter contended for, is the intricate, complete, eternal, universal misery of all mankind : The Son of God does flatly, and fully oppose *fatan*, in this very thing. Otherwise there is no war between them, i. e. if the devil is driving at one thing, and the Savior opposing another. But the opposition is direct and full ; as above stated.

SUPPOSE *fatan* to say, “ I will have the human kind miserable with me to all eternity :” And Christ to say, “ So you shall,

most of them ; but I will have my glory in it." Here is concurrence in the main. The variance and opposition is very small. But we know, that the seed of the woman does oppose Satan, *in full* ; and will not let him gain that very point he aimed at, either in whole, or in any part : Hence, he makes even the pains of this life, and natural death, not only to turn to his own glory, but to the real advantage and happiness of man. Satan never so much as hoped, or in the least aimed to obstruct the happiness or glory of God ; for he always knew it was utterly impossible for him to do it, in the least degree. The complete, eternal misery of all mankind was the sole point he aimed at ; and this is the plain scripture representation of the matter. The Savior fully and flatly opposed him in that very point ; and this alone can make a proper war, a true and direct contention. The Messiah did not say to Satan, " You shall have your will in the main, and I will have mine too : " But " you shall not have your will at all, and I will have mine wholly." " I will overcome and conquer you, on your chosen ground, on which you contend to make all the human kind forever miserable. The human kind shall be as happy, as universally so, and even more completely so, than if you had never determined on their ruin." This is a proper opposition ; and in this the Almighty Savior will be victorious.

BUT alas ! the *limitarian* plan gives Satan a grand victory and triumph, in all he had

in view, or ever had any hope to accomplish. It considers Christ as concurring with him, *in the main*, in all that he desired ; though, in another way, getting glory to himself, and making the victory and triumph of Satan only an occasion of it. Here is very little opposition. The devil has got his will in one thing, and the Savior in another. Satan expected, in his most sanguine hopes, little more than what he will obtain ; and Christ never meant to make any *great opposition* to the devil, while seeking whom he may devour ; though in another way he would secure his own glory. Consult the sacred oracles throughout, and let common sense say, whether there is any thing in all this, that bears the most distant likeness to the direct and full opposition, between the seed of the woman and the serpent contending *for one and the same thing*, even human happiness.

SATAN shall not finally have his will in the least part, or degree ; though for a season he may be gratified : For divine wisdom and goodness have ordained, that there shall be a long contention, and the war not soon over. Yet, in the end, Satan shall be wholly overcome and disappointed in every view, and in every hope that he has entertained. The prize in contest may be divided for a time ; and Satan may seem to have the greater share of it. It has indeed been so ever since the fall, to this day ; and may be so to the end of this present world. But in the result, Satan shall lose *all* ; and the Son of

God gain all, even the whole prize in dispute, and even destroy him that for a time, a long season, has the power of death. His victory shall be complete; though for a long time God divides him a portion with the great (adversary) and he divides the spoil with the strong. Since he hath poured out his soul unto death, and since God hath laid upon him the iniquity of *us all*, and he hath been numbered with transgressors, and bare the sin of many, i. e. as many as those, whose iniquities were laid upon him, even "US ALL," all the human kind; he will, in his own way and time, make the application sure. He will make intercession for the transgressors. Isai. liii. Not a word of exception or limitation is mentioned in the passages now alluded to.

THE word *many*, is often used in scripture to signify all the human kind. The resurrection of all the dead is expressed in the same manner. Dan. xii. Also the apostacy of the human race: "By one man's disobedience *many* were made sinners." Rom. v. Indeed it is the common language of scripture. The reader will multiply quotations as many as he pleases. The word *many* so used, is often explained by the synonymous term *all*; and often the plain sense and connection of the context so explains it. So in the passage above cited out of the prophet Isaiah, God laid on Christ the iniquity of *us all*, and he bare the sin of *many*, i. e. the same number, the whole number of transgressors;

and his effectual intercession shall be for just so many, in the final result.

THE kingdom of Jesus, in this world, hath ever appeared feeble, like a bruised reed and like smoking flax ; and the kingdom of Satan hath appeared in pomp and power ; but this will not forbid a complete victory on the part of the Mediator in the end. “ He shall not fail nor be discouraged, until he have set judgment in the earth : And the Isles shall wait for his law : ” He will, in his own time, “ open blind eyes and bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” Isa. xlii. 1.—16. Satan hath long led away most of the nations after images, and into various kinds of idolatry ; but Christ will finally reclaim as many as Satan hath deluded. “ God will gather together in one all things in Christ.” Yea, wherever “ sin hath abounded, grace shall much more abound.” The matter immediately in contest is the weal or woe of the human kind.

“ What can awake thee unawak'd by this,

“ Expended Deity on human weal ! ”

It is, moreover, worthy of our special notice that throughout the books of Moses, and indeed through the whole of the old testament, there is very little said of blessings, or of curses, of happiness, or of misery, but what is temporal and pertains to this present life, as every attentive reader of the sacred

books will immediately recollect. And when the word *hell* is mentioned any where in the old testament, it very seldom, perhaps never, signifies any other than the grave, or state of the dead in general. The curses on the disobedient are every where mainly such as take place in this world, or terminate in the grave; so are the blessings promised to the obedient. Citations from the scripture would be almost endless, the reader has them in his own memory without number. How shall we account for this, but upon the supposition that no distinction shall remain beyond death, except a distinction in degree of happiness, by the glorious Savior of all men?

SIN is an infinite evil in its own nature; and nothing at all ought, or can be said in excuse for it on our part: Yet, at the same time, it is not amiss for us to know that we do not, *cannot* hurt God by it, or in the least infringe upon his uninterrupted and infinite happiness, or add in the least thereunto by all our holiness and virtue. We do much harm to our fellow men and to ourselves by our wickedness, and much good by our virtues: But the essential glory and happiness of God is untouched by both. "If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him, or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? if thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth he of thine hand? thy wickedness may hurt a man

as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man." Job xxxv. 6, 7, 8.

WITH regard to God Most High, his eternal, fixed will and choice was never yet frustrated in any single instance, and never will be. This by no means excuses sin on our part. The mere nature of it is infinite guilt in us, in the first instance. Yet it is certain that every thing, every event in the natural and moral system, does take place just, exactly, as God chose and fixed in his immutable plan, before any creature had existence. Saint Paul grants this, when the thought is suggested even with a view to a bad improvement of it. The apostle gives the proper character of God, as absolute proprietor, absolute sovereign of all things, and sets up his absolute decrees and immutable plan, agreeably to the nature and perfections of such a God. The objector then steps in and says, "why then doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?" Upon this doctrine how can sinners be worthy of blame? Paul does not take back a single word he had said, but most solemnly reprimands the bold objector, who would on this ground justify his sin; by holding up to his view the holy nature and character of JEHOVAH, as *absolute proprietor* and *absolute sovereign* of all things; and he still maintains the principle he had laid down, without the least recantation. Rom. ix.

MUCH has been said against this true and proper character of God, as fixing his own immutable plan, both in the natural and in

the moral system, and seeing it executed through all the scenes of providence, from beginning to end, without the least possible variation. But all is in vain. We never can get rid of it, unless we will rid ourselves of the word of God, and of the plain light of nature, with all our just natural notions of the Supreme Being. We may even as well reject God himself, his very being, as to deny that all events were by him fixed and certain, in his own eternal, infinite mind, before creation began; or that God had infinite right so to establish his own plan of operation. Paul maintains this point, and pleads only this, to silence effectually every objector, who would on this ground, justify the nature of sin, when it is immediately known and plainly felt in the soul, to be, *in its own nature*, directly opposite to the nature and attributes of God. As though he had said, "you sinner, have not frustrated the eternal plan of the Most High, it is true, and you never can; but it is enough for you to know that your will and heart has been set to do it. This very thing is your guilt, and there can be no guilt, no blame worthiness in the universe, in any thing else; but in the evil will and disposition, in its nature and operations. You therefore have merited unutterable punishment. But I will maintain the character of my God; if I relinquish this idea of JEHOVAH, I can find no Supreme Being."

I would add: However wicked and unreasonable it is to abuse this just idea of God,

to indulge in sin ; yet we may and ought to make a very comfortable use of it in another way. We ought not once to imagine that we have hurt the most high in the least, by all our odious sins, as we hurt our fellow men and our own souls by them. God is infinitely happy in every thing that is done, every event, both in the natural and moral system. The whole is just what infinite wisdom and love decreed, and the whole forms the most lovely and benevolent system, of all possible systems that were in the eternal, infinite view of Deity.

THE nature of sin is, *in the first instance*, an object of sorrow in our hearts ; but its *existence, connections, and all its effects and consequences* pertain to the pure and holy, wise and good government of the most high God ; all whose ways are holy, just, and good. God need not punish poor sinners, to retrieve any harm they have done him, any damage, any infringement on his happiness. God is, and ever has been, and ever will be, just as happy as his soul hath chosen to be, i. e. infinitely so. With infinite pleasure he sees the operation of his own eternal plan, in every part and every movement of it. And mankind, in God's own time and way, will behold it as God does, and delight in it as God does, according to their capacity. We are in guilt and ignorance and sorrow for a time, and all is just : For the will of God cannot be otherwise. But, as the nature, of God is love, he will bring us all, "in due time," to see and approve of

his infinite wisdom and love, in all his counsels, and in all his works. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." "In the latter end ye shall consider it perfectly."

THERE have been, no doubt, many godly persons that never could endure the doctrine of the divine decrees, in the *limitarian* sense. The hearts of good people do not reject the absolute predestination and decrees of God, nor ever did, simply considered, or justly considered. What our hearts revolt at, is the attributing such decrees to God, as are contrary to his nature. "GOD IS LOVE." Attribute no decrees to God but those of infinite love, in harmony with all the perfections of Deity, and they will set easy on our minds. Charge him with no decrees that are contrary to his nature, and they will all appear beautiful. But, when we conceive of a God exhibiting a nature and disposition opposite to that of the great JEHOVAH; a God of some love and of great malevolence; and then conceive of such decrees as such a God would make, our hearts shudder at them. But decrees flowing from the true nature of the living and true God, are all lovely. All our hopes of happiness are founded on the nature, attributes, and sovereign will of the living and true God. His infinitely good disposition secures us. His paternal love and goodness makes us safe; as all his natural perfections are exerted under the direction of his wisdom and love.

COULD we suppose, I even shudder to

name the supposition, that JEHOVAH was in all things else as he now is ; but only had a disposition to infinite malevolence, as he now hath to infinite love and benevolence ; poor suffering creatures could not even then impeach his justice, simply considered : For their whole beings, and all the comfort, and all the pain that could ever affect them, would be God's own absolute property, to dispose of, as he pleased. Their very feelings, of every kind and degree would be his absolute property ; since their whole being is so. But, alas ! he would certainly act out his disposition, and propagate misery far and wide, and that to all eternity. My reader, is this your God ? Have you learned that he hath indeed such a disposition of heart, from his works or from his word ? Is this the Son of God that you have heard and thought so much about, that so loved the world as to die for the sins of the whole world ? Have you so learned Christ ? To dispute of *meum* and *tuum*, *mine* and *thine*, with Deity is utterly absurd ; but to hope and trust in the nature, attributes, will and word of such an infinitely good sovereign, through the atonement of his own dear Son, is unspeakably comfortable to miserable, dying sinners.

We are taught, in the word of God, that all our backwardness in believing to the salvation of our souls, lies in the enmity of our hearts ; at least, that if this was all removed, we should, under gospel light, rea-

dily believe. The understanding, and all the powers of our souls would act in a saving manner towards God and Christ, if the temper and disposition of our souls were right. This is certainly true. But our hearts are exceedingly opposed to God who is love. Therefore, until this enmity is removed, we cannot believe the doctrines of God's sovereign, self-moved love, pity, mercy, to such horrible sinners as we are.

WHEN we hear the pure doctrines of free grace, our hearts say, "this is too good news to be true." Mankind, in a state of nature, find no such disposition in themselves, nor in other men like themselves; and they do, and will imagine that God is, in this regard, "altogether such an one as themselves:" and so cannot believe there is any such self-moved love and mercy in God. They cannot forgive their enemies before they repent, and reform, and become their friends, and make all the restitution in their power; and hardly then. They will maintain some grudge after all. Therefore, they will not believe "that while they were yet enemies, in due time, Christ died for them," and paid their whole debt, while they were in all their enmity against God: And justified them, as to the law of God, while they were ungodly, working not in any manner acceptable to God, but wholly in enmity against him: And that "being justified by his death, they shall much more be saved by his life." i. e. By his almighty all gracious mediation, applying the benefit of purchased pardon and

salvation, by giving them repentance, faith, holiness, and fulfilling in them all the conditions, in his own way and time. They cannot believe, that "God hath exalted him a Prince and a Savior, to *give repentance* as well as remission of sins:" That "he that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for *us all*, all sinners, will much more with him freely give them all things." They have no such disposition themselves; but quite the reverse: and they cannot believe that God has, when he says, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out your sin for mine own sake." They cannot receive this saying; because, all they know of the temper of their own hearts, and of other men is directly opposite to such free love and self-moved mercy.

A SENSE of divine love, or charity, is never impressed on the hearts of sinful men, but in an almighty work of regeneration, making them feel, in some degree, the same temper and spirit. When they can forgive their most malicious enemies, and love them, and sincerely wish them all good, and pray for them, before they become any better, or ask any pardon at all, as Christ did, and as Stephen did; then they can believe that there is such an heart in God as his word does testify.

A YOUNG man that has been brought up in the family of a nobleman of vast wealth, who has always been a great benefactor to him, and whom he always loved most sincerely, and served most faithfully, giving

every testimony of love, fidelity and obedience, during his minority; well knowing that his benefactor always had the kindest sense of his filial love, duty, and obedience, will, when he comes of age, easily believe the report, if it be told him, that the nobleman has given him a valuable legacy, in his last will and testament. But, a young man that was under the like advantages, who yet always hated his benefactor, rebelled against him continually, mocked him every day, reviled him in all his conversation, did all he could to kill him more than a thousand times, and finally purloined all his goods that he could lay hands on, and ran away from him, and continues to hate him worse than ever; would by no means believe the report, should the story pass, that the said nobleman had given him a fine estate. His own sense of guilt, enmity, and ingratitude, would repel any idea that the news could be true. Just so, the glorious testimonials of God's infinitely free love and mercy, come to sinful men. The blessed gospel is opposed by them, on every ground and motive of enmity and unbelief, which can arise from a consciousness of the utmost disaffection in their hearts to an holy God, and the most awful rebellion of their whole lives against him.

THIS doctrine of infinite, universal, sovereign grace, flowing wholly out of the nature and disposition of God to mankind, is

wholly consistent with his rewarding every man according to his works ; and is the only doctrine of salvation that is so.

THE *limitarians* themselves, have always understood this doctrine as relating, not only to the different degrees of happiness among the saved, and the different degrees of misery among the damned ; but also *principally* to the great difference in the eternal world, between all who are saved, and all who are damned : Each description being compared with the other, or the saved compared with the damned. And this is certainly the true gospel sense of the declaration, so frequent in the word of God. But then we ought to understand the word of God aright, as to the true meaning of *salvation* and *damnation*. Which cannot be, in any other sense than what I plead for, consistent with that proportion of reward which is asserted.

No *limitarian* on earth will presume to say, that believers in this world are as much better than other sinners, as heaven is better than hell : Or that there is, or ever was, so great a difference in moral character, between any two men on earth, as there is between heaven and hell. There is not a man on earth, nor ever was since the fall, that can justly claim a better character than that of a *believing, penitent, abominable sinner*. We do not suppose that the best on earth have got half way from the worst character they ever had, before conversion, to that character which saints in heaven sustain. It is certain

that Job, David, and Paul, did not think they had. "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." "There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger, neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin." "My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness." "I am carnal fold under sin." "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." Thus spake these men, distinguished by the most eminent attainments in this world; and that without any compliment at all. They spake the truth, as they felt the real weight of it in their own souls. These are true specimens of the best men, and best moral characters that ever were, or will be, on this side death. Now let these three men go into the infinite and everlasting joys of heaven, (and no doubt they are there) and contrast with them the three vilest moral characters, that ever existed since the world began, gone away into the infinite and endless torments of hell, in the *limitarian* sense; and then say, my reader, is there not a greater difference between the reward of these, than there was between their works in this world? All may be in heaven, and yet the difference of reward be as great there as that of character here. In no other possible way can the proportion take place according to scripture.

If believers, in this life, were as holy as they are in heaven, and unbelievers altogether as bad as the devil; yet even then, there

would be no proportion of reward to their works, on the *limitarian* plan, unless they had been one eternity *a parte ante* (as the language of the schools is) before they went into another eternity *a parte post*. The time of works, or of exhibiting a moral character in this life, bears no proportion to eternity. Duration, or long continuance in good or bad works, no doubt, hath its due consideration in the reward; but temporal, momentary works bear no proportion to an eternal reward either of happiness or misery. Do not misunderstand me here. I mean not in the least, to countenance the idle notion of those who say, "because sin is but temporary in this world; therefore it is not strictly just that its punishment should be eternal." I have before exploded this idea. I am now speaking only of the *proportion* mentioned in the gospel, between the rewards of mankind in a future state; not of the just demerit of sin. I say, it seems exceeding plain, on the *limitarian* plan, there can be no proportion at all between the rewards of the elect, and reprobate, as measured by their different works in this life. All in themselves deserve an eternal hell, no doubt; but God has been graciously pleased to assure us, that the state of each man in the world to come, shall be in proportion to his works here. This never can be, if some great sinners, who sinned all their lives here, yet believing sinners, are in the next life consummately and eternally happy; and other poor, miserable sinners, that is, unbelieving sinners, are made con-

summately and eternally miserable. Both deserve it. But we are now availing ourselves of God's own declaration of sovereign goodness in the gospel. I know, and I have already said it again and again; that the law thunders eternal, certain damnation to sinners, and it is the awful voice of justice throughout the sacred oracles from beginning to end; but there is not one word of gospel, glad tidings, or good news to sinners in all this: It is all law, *pure law*, glorious law, denouncing what, *in pure justice*, ought to be. There is not a single word of the gospel in the whole of this, in all these dreadful thunders. The gospel mildly and sweetly announces that all these dreadful things have taken place in Christ, the *head of every man*. And now he hath full power and commission to apply his own redemption, to all those of whom he is the head, and for whom he died; and that in his own time and way.

WE all know there will be different rewards in heaven, according to different characters and works in this life. None will be rewarded *for their works*; but *according to them*. It will be so with all mankind that ever lived or shall live. They will, every one of them, bear a proportion to each other, *as to their state in the eternal world*, as they did in their *respective characters and works* here. This never can be, without the universal triumph of Christ over sin, death and hell, and all the condemning power of the holy law, in tasting death for every man. We could easily see all this to be the true spirit of the

gospel; if we only knew and felt within our own souls, that the great PARENT of the universe, as much exceeds any human parent, in love to his offspring, as he is a greater being than man; and that this is the real nature of God.

THIS blessed, gospel doctrine gives us an admiring view of the wisdom and goodness of God, in the appointment and ordination of his civil ministers in the present world, to make this life tolerable, by the suppression of vice and immorality: Especially as secure, hardened sinners are not at all restrained by the threatnings of eternal damnation, even though they deny not the awful doctrines they hear; but allude to the truth of them, by most profane and horrid imprecations, in their common conversation. Present, visible punishments strike them with dread, and greatly restrain them. A fine, a prison, a whip, and a gibbet have great influence to suppress their enormities.

GOD has, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, appointed his civil ministers for good. These powers are ordained of God, for this great and benevolent purpose, to be a terror to evil doers, and the supporters of those that do well. It will give an exalted sense of God to those that know his salvation, to see all those ministers he has ordained for the good of mankind, executing their respective offices well, for the glory of his great name and the good of human society, in punishing all transgressors with the utmost faithfulness and impartiality, according to

good and wholesome laws ; and in encouraging all the virtuous and regular in the community. We ought to rejoice that they who do all in their power to make their fellow-men happy, should partake largely of that good, which they so much strive to promote and communicate ; and that they, who war against the happiness of mankind, should feel in a proper degree, that misery, which, by their wickedness, they would bring upon all. God's glorious decrees of sovereign, rich, self-moved mercy to them at last, do not in the least, excuse them from the due reward of their deeds here ; no, nor even those that have already believed to the saving of their souls, when they backslide and do the deeds of the wicked.

THERE are a great variety of just and terrible punishments from the hand of God's civil ministers, that do, and ought to meet and oppose flagrant transgressors, in all their open wickedness in this world. Those indeed have their visible and sensible effect. The scourge and the gibbet are very terrible to those that are wholly unmoved by every consideration which does not apply to their senses : And how wretched are daring sinners in this world, by the just rebukes of heaven in this way ! While they are hardened in vice, all consolation arising from the final mercy of God is wholly shut out of their souls, just as much on the plan I plead for, as on any more limited doctrine whatever. The most glorious truth, without an heart-felt conviction of it, can give no

comfort. These poor, miserable creatures are just as we have been wont to say the elect are, antecedent to their conversion ; not at all the more comfortable for their election, until they are brought to know the things freely given them of God. How miserable in this life, are thieves, drunkards, traitors, murderers, and such like ! Every good law, and every good magistrate, and all good people oppose them with all their might, with one awful punishment after another, until many of them end their lives of fear, trembling and horror on a gibbet, awful spectacles of shame and reproach, and without any comfort in their own souls, from the blessed truth I maintain. For it will fully appear, that no man of the vile character I have been describing, while with such an heart, can derive any comfort from this plan of salvation ; any more than any of the elect of God, on any supposition whatever, could have inward divine consolation, while in a state of nature, of unbelief, and utter impenitency. I say, how miserable are such poor creatures in this world ! How full of shame and horror, when taken away by the arm of justice ! And why should we grudge them the mercy and pity of the Father of their spirits, on whose sovereign grace alone we ourselves are dependent for better conduct, and better circumstances in this life ; if he is pleased, in his infinite goodness, through the all-sufficient atonement of him who died, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world, to give relief, everlasting relief, to

these poor, trembling spirits, his own offspring at last, even at the time when the soul, with infinite anguish and the most horrible expectations, is separating from that body, from a union with which, it derived all its awful depravity.

IF we have been more favoured in this life, by the sovereign, distinguishing goodness of the common Parent of all, let us be exceeding thankful. We should do well to remember, that, considering all the superior degrees of God's free grace granted to us, against which we have also sinned every day, and every moment, we may be as guilty in the sight of God, as our poor unhappy brethren, that never have been blessed with that prudent foresight, and those restraints wherewith God has been pleased to favor us. We may well acquiesce in all the displays of divine justice which we see in this world, even in those that are condemned to flee to the pit, and our hand should not stay them. But, I think, we can give no reason why the blood of Jesus Christ, which *cleanseth from all sin*, should not save them in another world ; which will not lie *full strong* against every hope of our own salvation. If their sins go beforehand to judgment, ours may follow after. An earthly tribunal affords but a miserable decision to determine who are deepest in guilt, in the eye of the Omniscient Judge.

WE have exceeding strong motives to religion and all moral virtue, drawn from views

of honor and prosperity, pleasure and joy in this life; and to deter us from the ways of wickedness, from the opposite consideration. *Cæteris paribus*. a man is always happy in this world, in proportion to that degree of true godliness and virtue which forms his real character; and miserable in proportion to the degree of wickedness that governs him. Also great, very great will be the distinction between such different characters to all eternity. Their reward will be as different, as their works have been. And this may be; yet both of them be in the same world there, as well as here. No man in this world, since the fall, ever had any heart but a bad one, *really and truly so*. "There is none good but one, that is God." No man ever did one good deed, in the strict sense of the divine law. "They are all gone out of the way; there is none that doeth good, no not one."

WHEN we speak of the good heart of believers, and of their good and holy lives; and when we find these epithets in scripture, they are never to be understood in *strict propriety of speech*, but only in a *comparative sense*, i. e. *less wicked*, in the exercises of their hearts, as to the real matter of these exercises, than unbelievers are, or than they themselves were, in a state of unregeneracy. It is the same with regard to their good and holy lives: i. e. they are *much less wicked*, as to the matter of their conduct, than once they were, or than unbelievers ordinarily are. But it is certain, that, *in propriety* and

strictness of speech, no positive goodness belongs to any human character on earth; nor can this possibly obtain, unless something be found as pure in all respects as the law of God, which is the only measure of positive moral goodness.

IN real propriety of language, all men are great sinners without exception, and some, as to the matter of their character and conduct, much greater sinners than others. I say, *as to the matter*; for I shall consider obligations, motives, aggravations, &c. in the sequel. But in this all men on earth do now, and ever did agree, viz. "*the heart and character of every man, in the sight of God, is an awful, unspeakably bad heart and character.*" And there will be no reward to any in the next world, but a reward of free, sovereign grace, through the atonement and mediation of God's elect Savior, the elect head of every man. All may be in heaven together in God's own time, brought there in his own way, with as great a distinction of reward *there*, as of character here. But if some are personally in hell, and others in heaven, to interminable duration; the difference of reward will be infinitely greater than that of character and works ever was.

ALL believers are absolutely, positively, and perfectly holy, *in a relative sense*, i. e. in Christ. But this hath no concern with their real character; and their works have no hand in all this. Their own personal character, and their works are just as far from having any consideration in their justifying

righteousness, as the character and works of those who never heard of a Savior. They are justified *as ungodly*, by that righteousness made known to the soul, by the medium of faith, which is unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference. There is no difference, none at all, but what exists while the medium of faith and the means of application are suspended: None as to the covenant of redemption: None as to the undertaking of Christ: None with regard to the purchase or faithfulness and promise of him, who came into the world, not to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved: None as to merit on the part of man, or any motion towards God in the heart of one man more than another: None, as to the eternal good purpose of God: In this, and every other sense he is no respecter of persons. The language of a God of infinite, sovereign mercy, to his children partakers of flesh and blood, and for the sake of union with whom, his own Son took part of the same, is this, without any distinction; "I, even I am he that blotteth out your sin, for mine own sake."

VERILY there are all the distinctions among mankind, in this, and a future world, which the holy scriptures know any thing of, without our making any distinction, invented by the blindness of the human mind, and the great want of benevolence that is natural to man. Pride, and love of pre-eminence which is so dear to human nature,

will not let us rest easy, but in a self-exalting prospect that a very few of us shall have the pleasure, in the next world, to look down on the great body of mankind infinitely beneath us, and feeling our own happiness much heightened, and our own glory much augmented, by the contrast of their extreme misery and shame. Do you feel this spirit, my reader? You had need take care, lest, on your plan of limiting the Holy One of Israel, yourself may take the inferior rank among those, whom you now view in prospect with a future unutterable contempt.

WHATEVER difference, or *specific difference*, if any prefer these terms, there may be between the grace given to one and another, in this life, the character, temper and ways of all the human race agree in many things more than they differ! "As in water face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man." Bring all the human race together, and their dissimilitude will be very small, in comparison of their general agreement. A present believer hath indeed something, which a present unbeliever hath not; and God knows what a *little something* it is. His omniscient eye sees how awfully we all agree. He never yet saw a reason, or found a motive *out of himself*, to save any of us all. Had all mankind right thoughts of God, a real true knowledge of that glorious fountain of love, this would make salvation appear *common salvation*, as it did of old. Jude iii. And none would deny it, or even so much as wish the doctrine were not true. If that

knowledge of God, which all men are commanded to seek after above all things, would establish us in this blessed truth, is not the foundation of it real, solid, and true? Or does our discovery and knowledge of things so glorious, give being to their own objects?

IF mankind were wise enough to know in what way to find their greatest interest, joy, pleasure, and delight, even in this present life, they would certainly seek it and find it only in the ways of real piety and virtue, in the ways of true wisdom. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to all that lay hold on her; and happy is every one that retaineth her." All the happiness of heaven consists in true religion, in the highest perfection of it. If it is not happiness as far as we have it, in the present world, it will not be in a future: For the nature of it is the very same, in whatever part of God's vast dominions we are. The nature, tendency, and concomitants of sin are just the reverse. If sin is happiness in this world, it will be in the next; if it gives real joy and pleasure here, it will there. The hell that the devils are in, and that all mankind deserve, and are condemned to, by the law of God, is nothing but perfection of sin, with its inseparable connections and consequences. These remarks being admitted, we are prepared to resume the thought before suggested; comparing one sinner of the humankind with another. I have intimated

that there is a vast difference, in many *respects*, and yet in *one grand respect* none at all.

WITH regard to this present life, and our connection with human society; and with respect to our own comfort or misery here, there is very great difference between those we call the best, and the worst of men. The former do much good, and inwardly feel much comfort and real, solid pleasure; and are, in the general course of the divine government, of all men most beloved, honored, and promoted. I say, *in the general course of providence*; for special times of persecution and the like, I now leave out of the question. In saying this, I say just what the word of God, in the general tenor of it, abundantly asserts, and what the general experience of all nations of the earth does abundantly confirm.

EVEN, in days of the most bloody persecution, the real happiness and joy of the godly is much greater than that of any other men. Whatever a blind, carnal world may imagine, there is in very deed a great, and most blessed reward of holiness and piety, in the present life. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." "In keeping thy commandments there is great reward." "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" "If ye obey and serve him, ye shall spend your days in prosperity, and your years in pleasure." No outward circumstances, or adverse dispensations can possibly frustrate this

exceeding, real, inward delight and joy in the mind, in the soul, the seat of all rational and spiritual pleasure. “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing: As having nothing, yet possessing all things.” The real, substantial, solid pleasures of believing, godly souls, have a basis very different from all the emotions of the hearts of God’s enemies, which deluded souls call pleasure. They are always “like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” Whatever false shew of happiness they may make, in the eyes of the world, yet “there is no peace, saith God, to the wicked.” There is truly as great a difference in the real, inward reward of the virtuous and vicious, the godly and ungodly, in this life, as there is in the different temper of their minds, and in the different ways in which they walk.

BUT now let us compare their desert of punishment, in another world, *solely as it respects the law of God*, the great and only unerring and decisive rule. We all agree in the following ratio of estimating the demerit of sin in the sight of God. We consider the matter of it as one thing, i. e. how far our hearts and lives deviate from the law of God; and the obligations against which we sin, as another. We compare these two together, and thence judge of the real criminality of a sinner in the sight of God. This is agreeable to reason and the word of God.

LET us set up two men, and try their guilt in the sight of God, or in the eye of

his holy law, by the above rule. Pharaoh shall be one, and Paul the other. The former was a most horrible sinner, in the eyes of all good people; the latter was one of the best of men, in the same view. Pharaoh did all the harm in his power, and his whole heart was in it. Paul, after his conversion, did much good, with a sincere and pious heart. Thus far the difference of character is exceeding great, while we attend only to the matter of it. Next bring in the obligations. Pharaoh was, perhaps, least of all mankind favored with tenderness of conscience, or restraining grace. He was in all the gross darkness of paganism, and God did indeed harden his heart, in a most signal manner, and that in a way consistent with his own holiness and purity. It is here quite foreign to the argument, to enquire into the manner how. Whether only by permission, or otherwise, it is certain God did it. He was left under the least obligations and motives to keep him from sin, we will suppose, of any man that ever lived; and we will also suppose, and grant, that the matter of his sin, in heart and life, was the greatest of any man on earth. Paul, after his conversion, was blessed with the greatest divine light (we will suppose) of any man on earth. His natural powers and education were exceeding good, with most eminent degrees of saving grace in his soul, abundance of sanctifying grace, and an equal degree of divine joy and consolation. And he served God

in a most eminent manner. Yet he always sinned in some degree, in his heart and in his life; he was never perfect one single moment; far, very far from it, if we may believe his own inspired testimony of himself.

Now, did not Paul's obligations and motives to holiness, as far exceed Pharaoh's, as the matter of his character was better? What made him better, but his motives and obligations, arising from the light, grace, and spirit, freely given him of God? Yet his character was always very inadequate to the purity of God's holy law. All that made him less sinful in heart, and life, was mere obligation from God. All light and grace, and every thing that hath this effect, is so. Multiply the degree of his remaining sinfulness, as to the matter of it, into the degree of obligation and motive to which it was opposed, and what less will be the total amount, in the sight of God, than that of Pharaoh? This abominable prince had obligations, against which he sinned, many and great; as every man in the world has. But compare them with all that a sovereign God did for the apostle, all his light and grace; the difference is exceeding great. God did as much more for Paul, as his heart and life were better than Pharaoh's. All he did for that eminent apostle was mere obligation on him, and the law justly required perfection of him; But he was always very far from it. Obligations on Pharaoh, i. e. light and grace, were as far withheld from him, by a holy sovereign God, as

his heart and life was more sinful than that of Paul. Perhaps my reader has not much attended to this thought in time past ; but I think it worthy of solemn attention. I am sure it runs through the whole word of God. This will account for those most abominable descriptions, which Job, David and Paul give of themselves, even in their highest attainments in grace, and after all their pious walk with God, and all the great good they had done in the world.

DESCRIPTIONS of this tenor, which the best of men give of their hearts and lives in holy writ, and which I have always heard the most eminent christians give of themselves, in their solemn and devout prayers, were surprizing to me, in the days of my early youth. I once understood them as humble and meek compliments, which they were disposed to make to the Deity, or expressions entirely hyperbolical. When I so often heard the most godly ministers, and other eminent christians describe their hearts and lives, in the presence of God, bad enough for the vilest and most notorious sinners in the world, I used to wonder how they dared thus to compliment with an heart-searching God, who, I supposed, must know they did not speak the strict truth, and that they knew it themselves. I did not so much wonder to hear a rich man own his poverty ; or a delicate lady despise a fine entertainment, an excellent dinner, or supper she had provided, in the presence of her guests. Such compliments I thought might bear

having countenance from frequent custom, and an appearance of humility and delicacy. But, I thought it quite amiss to say that to the great, heart-searching God, which both the speaker and the object of prayer knew was far from strict and plain truth.

AFTER long attention to the law of God, and the hearts and lives of men, and the obligations we are under to God, very especially for every degree of divine light and saving grace; I am at last very sensible of the propriety of all such confessions before God, and that they are wholly without a compliment. The pharisee in the parable was, no doubt, a man of pure and amiable character in the eyes of the world, and deserved great honor and respect from man, for the good he had done in the community, by his shining virtues. But, when he was transacting the great concerns of his soul with his Maker, he might have prayed just as the scandalous, infamous publican did, and with good acceptance too.

LET beneficent, shining characters, the eminent benefactors of mankind receive great honor and respect from their fellow-men. Let them stand far distinguished from the common people, and farther still from all the vicious and immoral: But as they stand related to that holy law which considers every obligation men are under to perfect holiness, as well as the matter of their conduct, I say, in this view, let every high thought and towering imagination be levelled with the dust. Let every mountain and hill

be brought down, and the Lord alone exalted.

MANKIND have a spirit of monopoly. Nothing is more natural to them. If they have great advantages and honors in the eyes of others in this world, they are apt to insist on those distinctions before God, as an argument for eternal continuance. But, "the last shall be first, and the first shall be last."

THAT which is highly esteemed among men, even all that men call good, in the human character, is so far from bearing the test of God's holy law, that it is, in that relative sense, abomination in the sight of God. Let the best man on earth plead the best of his heart and his life, as a ground of acceptance with God; and he shall find it an utter abomination. The atonement stands by itself alone and unmixed: "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root and offspring of David, and he alone hath prevailed." This glorious truth hath ever been deeply impressed on the hearts of the friends of God, in this world, and will be to all eternity. The blind, proud notions of mankind will have no place in heaven, as they have here. There they will know and feel that "the former things are passed away."

THE doctrine which I plead for, has a great tendency to afford believers adoring and submissive exercises of mind, in view of all the sin and calamity they find in the world.

THEY see that God has done nothing in-

consistent with his infinite love, and his avowed character in his word, by introducing, in his holy providence, or permitting, if you please, all the moral evil that is in the world. It will all have a glorious issue, conducive to the greater manifestation of his infinite love, and all his amiable attributes, in the wonders of redeeming love. And in a view of all natural and penal evil connected in justice with the evil of sin, the soul adores God and falls in lowly submission under all his holy rebukes. So, when we see so many miserable creatures of our own kind struggling with pain and calamity, through life, we behold them as Jesus does, who died to save them from wrath to come; and our souls are filled with humble submission, and all the astonishment of devout love.

WHEN we read of all the dreadful slaughters of the ancient inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and many millions more of God's own offspring like ourselves, under all the horrors of massacre, by the express command of the Father of their spirits, we shall yet say "God is love." He hath, in all these things given a due testimony of his justice, and his abhorrence of sin. Yet it is not "the rod of an enemy, or the chastisement of a cruel one:" God hath not forgotten that he is their own Father, by creation, and that creation is a dear child of his love. On this plan, we do not stumble at any thing he does; but feel these his words with believing joy, "as I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." When we

think of all the awful and terrible judgments that have fallen on the trembling children of men, our own flesh and blood, it is well for us to remember what he hath said, who died for the sins of the whole world, "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw ALL men unto me."

LET it not be imagined here, that I would so much as intimate, that God is under any obligation to save men finally; because that, in the dispensations of his government, they have been very miserable in this world: Or that those who have been most so, have *in justice*, any claim of reparation on their Maker. I mean no such thing. I argue only from the nature and attributes of JEHOVAH, as they appear in his word and works. He is worthy to be God supreme, by his own infinite worth, by virtue of his own infinitely glorious and lovely perfections. He is *by nature* God, as some have well expressed it.

MY hope is founded entirely on his *nature* and *disposition*, through his own Son made manifest. In this manifestation, GOD IS LOVE. His moral disposition is infinitely amiable and inviting. It is the supreme joy of all holy, wise, intelligent beings, that there is such a God. His nature is the basis of all happiness, and the foundation of all hope. It is the source of all our comfort, that there is such a God over all, blessed forevermore; that he is Creator, Proprietor, and absolute Disposer of all things, absolutely sovereign and uncontrouled; and that he worketh all things according to the counsel of his own

will. *For his will flows from a nature infinitely glorious and lovely.*

WE have no claim of justice on him who gave us our whole being, whose absolute property we are. Whatever he does with us, he meddles with nothing but his own. Hence, I argue only from the immutable nature of God, infinitely perfect and good, and from his plain word and all his manifestations. I say, these do ascertain the final redemption of a whole guilty world, or, that he will have all men to be saved.

HAD there been an eternal, Supreme Being, Creator and absolute Proprietor of all things, as JEHOVAH is; who in his *moral disposition*, his *moral nature*, had been just the reverse from what he really is. Horrible supposition! but lawful in the view I make it. Had he created innumerable myriads of rational creatures more than ever yet had existence; and made them all consummately sinful and miserable; and had we our place in that woful scale of beings, doomed to endless sin, sorrow, and pain unutterable: Even on this supposition, we could have no claim of justice, on our Maker, as we have upon our fellow creatures who injure us, and bring pain and misery upon us. They take hold of property not their own, but ours, in opposition to their claim; and therefore we may in justice demand reparation of them. Not so is it with regard to the supreme Fountain of all being, who is the Creator and absolute Proprietor of all things, including all the feelings and sufferings of creatures.

Their very pains and all their affections are his property : For their whole being is so.

IN such an awful, lamentable case, as above supposed, we could never accuse our Maker of injustice, with any kind of propriety. All we could say would be to howl, in doleful accents, to all eternity ; “ *the Supreme reigneth, let all creatures mourn ; let the multitude of beings lament and bewail ! woe ! woe ! woe !* to miserable creatures, that such is the nature and disposition of him that ruleth over all.” I cannot think we do any honor to the blessed JEHOVAH, in ascribing to him a moral nature, in any wise similar to this. One as opposite thereto as we can possibly conceive of, is indeed the very nature of that blessed Being whom we adore. God’s will cannot possibly, in the nature of things, be unjust ; and by *his own immutable nature*, it is infinitely good, and the spring of all blessedness and joy. Diffusion of being and blessedness flows from the nature of God. This doctrine exhibits JEHOVAH, as the true God, whom angels and saints adore, “ Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last.”

IF we carefully attend to the holy scriptures, we do not find any holy men insisting upon terms of limitation with God, as though they thought there could ever be in the disposition, or will of God any possibility of doing wrong to them. They all appear to choose God should be just as he is,

or as his own nature does dispose and incline him ; and they know he ever will be so disposed towards them. This is their happiness ; and in this they put all their confidence. All their hopes arise from this ; although they have ever looked on themselves as fit objects of eternal misery, as any creatures that ever God made. His character is often, and with great propriety, called his name. Poor, penitent, believing sinners repair to nothing else, nothing but his character and disposition as manifested in a Savior, in whom only they are righteous. “ The name of the Lord is a strong tower : The righteous runneth into it and are safe.”

It is truly for the honor of JEHOVAH, that we should all know, that he alone is the absolute source of all being and blessedness : That he is absolute, sovereign, and uncontrouled, in every view, no foreign influence of any kind or degree ever acting on him : That his creatures never can nor shall have any thing else to found their hopes upon, but his own glorious nature and sovereign will : That his manifestations are all glorious and comfortable to every human soul, that understands and believes them : And that it is not the understanding and belief of a sinner that makes them so, but they are so in their own nature.

No sinner of mankind does God any honor, by believing that all his own hopes of pardon and salvation, depend as much on himself, as it is possible any thing can depend on a creature, viz. on some disposition or

qualification in himself. This denies God his proper character, in his relation to sinful man. But to believe the blessed God has given qualifications as sure to unworthy sinners, in his own way and time, as he hath provided an all-sufficient Savior for a guilty world, is ascribing to God all his glorious attributes, "working all things (without the least exception) according to the counsel of his own will."

If the *limitarians* could be disposed to think, study and read as much on this point, as the writer hath done for many years past, with an ardent desire to find nothing but the truth to rest in; they would see that it does no honor to the great and glorious God to make eternal salvation, in the least, depend on any creature, as to the certain event of it. Indeed, all the powers of the soul are fitly exercised by a sovereign God, in his own way, in the application and enjoyment of all that flows out of the mere goodness of his own nature, in a way honorable to himself, by the substitution and mediation of the second man, the Lord from heaven.

I CAN find no plan of religion but this, that can ever warrant the great charity, and union among men, which is so much recommended in the sacred oracles. If we consider ourselves as distinguished from most of our fellow men, in the eternal purposes and views of God: That we are destined to his infinite, everlasting love, and most others to his hatred, wrath and vengeance forever-

more ; we shall hardly find it in our hearts to exercise that pity, and tenderness, love and good will to them, that the gospel requires. If we think our God will be their eternal enemy, and delight himself in their eternal destruction ; we shall hardly feel ourselves friendly to our God, in loving and pitying all mankind, and striving all in our power for their salvation. You cannot more displease your fellow men, than by manifesting great love and tenderness to their enemies.

AGAIN ; In conversation, or in hearing the word preached, or in reading the multitude of good authors that have written on our most important concerns, we cannot upon any other plan, maintain gospel candor. We shall find the light and communications of God to men so various ; and their channel of preaching or writing, in many respects, so devious from one another ; that we shall be ready to scruple whether there is any truth in the doctrine of a special revelation from heaven. We shall fall away, at least, as far as Deism. But, on the plan, for which I am pleading, the whole difficulty is obviated : As every writer uninspired, every preacher may be wrong in many things, and some in many more than others ; yet all be essentially right. By them God communicates light and truth to the world, in various measures and degrees. Perhaps, it has not as yet been fit, in the sight of God, in the former, or present gradations of divine communication, to enlighten any au-

thor, or preacher so, but that all have been involved in more darkness than they have seen of the true light. Hence arises great bitterness of spirit towards many, or universal scepticism. But on the gracious principles I am supporting, we can rest contented, that the infinitely wise Being should cause the light to dawn and increase just as fast as his own wisdom and goodness dictate. And we can love one another as the gospel requires; though under various degrees of instruction, and under various modes of thinking.

THUS, if I read an author, or hear a sermon which I look upon one half according to truth, and the other half not so; that part which is good, ought to set as well on my mind as if the whole was so, and I ought to love the writer, or the preacher, and bless God that they are enlightened so far as they are. This I take to be a gospel spirit, and if so, it is according to the truth of the gospel. It is for want of such a spirit, that many will reject all that is good in an author or preacher, because of the many mistakes, or supposed mistakes found in both. But, in good truth, if we will be instructed and edified by none, but those who are right in all things, we deprive ourselves of the whole benefit of instruction, or edification from any man uninspired.

THE doctrine I am pleading for, is much in favor of gospel love and charity, harmony and peace. This is one mark of the truth of it. The true tendency of this principle is

so far from disposing those who believe it, to contend and quarrel with the teachers and ministers of the christian churches, wherewith they are now furnished, that it will induce them to love them more than ever, and to treat them with all possible kindness. At the same time, we shall wish and pray, that it may please God to lead them further into those glorious truths, which they understand but in part. Thus it will have that quiet, and peaceful influence among ministers and people, which so much adorns the gospel.

THE true import of the initiating seal among God's covenant people, both in the former and present œconomy, confirms the doctrine which I am advocating.

THE whole Jewish church, and the great body of christians, who practise the initiating seal in infancy, have ever understood it to be a seal of the covenant of grace, to which even the infant seed of covenant parents, have a right, and are thereby seated in the covenant of grace and salvation; even though they have always allowed, that such children are personally no better than the infants of heathen. An infant among the Jews, at eight days old, was supposed to be no better, *personally*, than any children of other nations; yet they were sealed by circumcision in the covenant of grace and salvation; even as they are now by baptism.

THE church of God and the ordinances of it, from the days of Abraham to this day, were designed and instituted as a light or

lamp which God holds up in the world, to beam forth by degrees, and fully manifest, in due time, his purposes of mercy and salvation to a guilty world, through that Mediator which he appointed to take away the sin of the whole world. Hence God hath commanded that all the infants of covenant parents should be sealed, though personally in the same unregenerate state with the world in general, as a testimony that all were purchased by the common Redeemer of sinners, and should be brought to actual enjoyment of salvation, in the time and manner most fit in the eyes of infinite wisdom and goodness. Hence any child of a pagan has right to the seal, if its lot is providentially among God's covenant people, and under proper circumstances to be trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

ACCORDINGLY, the commission given to the apostles, was, to go forth and teach all nations, and to command them to believe that divine truth which bringeth salvation, and to baptize all nations to whom they preached, both parents and children, (if they would submit to it) as a seal of the common salvation. This was not a token that they had done, or ever could do any thing toward their own salvation; but that Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, had engaged to accomplish the salvation of a guilty world, and had made all sure, and would seal it by baptism.

WE can, upon no other principle, make use of the seals and special ordinances with

any consistency. How shall we seal, in the covenant of grace and salvation, persons destined and decreed to eternal personal damnation? How shall we admit those to the holy supper, a seal of our eating and drinking with Christ, at his table, in his heavenly kingdom, who may be, for ought we know, not only in an unrenewed state at present, but also under an irreverfible decree of eternal reprobation? Would the Moft High, in any wife, allow his feals to be fo ufed? God never would have fet fuch blind creatures as we are, about the work of admitting into the church, and exercifing difcipline, or to handle the feals of grace and falvation, had his own plan been a *limitarian* plan, or had he fent his Son into the world on any other errand than that the world through him might be faved.

DISCIPLINE must indeed be kept up in the church; and the body elected to fuch fpecial and glorious privileges, out of a world, as yet buried in darknefs, must be kept vifibly pure, as bearing a proper, vifible refemblance to its pure and holy head. Thofe members that do not bear this vifible refemblance, must be delivered to Satan, yet only “*for the deffruftion of the flefh.*” A dreadful thing it is, to be in a ftate of excommunication from the privileges and confolations of the people of God in the world; but there is nothing in it that affects the certainty of eternal falvation at the great day: For the exprefs end of every final cenfure on earth, is, “*that the fpirit may be faved in the day of our Lord Jefus.*” 1. Cor.

v. 5. Whatsoever is thus bound on earth, shall be bound in heaven, both as to its propriety and good tendency in this world, and its glorious issue in the world to come, even the salvation of the soul in the day of the Lord. Hence an excommunicated person is still a brother, and not to be "treated as an enemy; but admonished as a brother."

MANY souls for whom Christ died, have justly experienced the awful sentence of excommunication from his church on earth: Even Moses and Paul were willing to suffer the same, if it might redound to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. i. e. As most have understood them. Yet this doth by no means frustrate the irreversible and extensive plan of redeeming love, to gather together in one all things in Christ, and to make all men, in due time, see the glory of this mystery, which for many ages and generations lay hid in great obscurity.

God's church on earth, his visible covenant people were always designed, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, as a lamp, a light to the world, a city set on an hill, to manifest and hold forth to a lost world what God hath done for them, and what he would do. The church is a present, visible representation of divine love and mercy to sinners, to a lost world. The church holds forth to the world the glorious God with all his divine attributes and blessed purposes, and the Savior of all men, in all his glorious offices, and the Holy Spirit, in all his infinite and

almighty energy. "By the church is made known the manifold wisdom of God." Eph. iii. 10. The church was not set up in the world, to shew us how much better some men are than others, or what a respecter of persons God is, in his purposes and operations; but rather to witness that God hath concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all. Not to hold forth the worth and riches of any community of poor sinners; but rather, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

ANOTHER argument against the *limitarian* scheme, is this: *No man, on their principles, can do his duty; even if his whole heart and disposition were perfectly right.*

It is our duty to acquiesce in God's will in every event. But an holy heart cannot do this in such an event as his own eternal damnation, or that of any of his fellow men. The principal misery of that eternal damnation they plead for, lies in an eternal, fixed and growing opposition of heart to an holy God, and the horrible rebellion proceeding from such an heart. It is certain an holy and right heart, which is full of love to God, cannot feel willing to be thus at enmity with God, and hate and rebel against him to all eternity. It is equally certain, that an holy man, that loves his neighbor as himself, and values his neighbor's happiness as his own, and is exceedingly averse to any dishonor done to God, any opposition against him, as much if it be in his neighbor as in him-

self, cannot be willing that his neighbor should thus hate and sin against God to all eternity. If we do not so love our neighbors in all things as ourselves, we fall short of that perfect benevolence required of us.

BESIDES, the nature of this opposition to God is infinitely evil and odious, whether in ourselves, or in any of the human kind. Hence if our hearts are right, we shall feel a great opposition to it, and can never be pleased with it, or reconciled to it. We must be exceedingly wicked, to be reconciled to such great and eternal wickedness.

It is true, the redeemed will in the true gospel sense see the smoke of their torment ascend up forever and ever, and shout Alleluia in the view of it; but this will be in the manner I have before taken notice of, only in the glass of *pure justice*, in the glass of the divine law. Thus they will eternally see all the human race, and themselves as well as others, forever dwelling with devouring fire and everlasting burnings; while, in *very fact* and in *person*, they shall from their munition of rocks shout Alleluia, finding the bread of life sustaining their happy souls, and the waters of everlasting consolation made sure.

It never can be found in a holy heart to take any more satisfaction in the rebellion of others against God than in his own; both are infinitely hateful to a soul obedient to God. The *limitarian* plan, if fully considered, and realized seriously in the soul, (which is very little done) can never meet with the

approbation of the friends of God. They will feel their hearts inclined like the infinitely benevolent heart of God, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. They will pray for the salvation of all, and plead this warrant so to do, viz. It is the will of God and our Savior, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

FURTHER, the charitable hope and desire of good people, such as the gospel requires, is certainly agreeable to the word of God. Now suppose all the race of mankind that ever have lived in the world, or ever shall be in it, were to pass before any godly man, individually in succession. Ask that good man, as he views them passing before his eyes one after another, with regard to each in particular, "Do you hope and desire that in the infinite mercy of God through Christ, *that man* may be saved?" He would say *yes, with all my heart*. So he would say of the first that passed before him, and so of the second, and the same of every one. To answer otherwise, would indicate a spirit not regulated by the word of God, i. e. not according to truth. But thus to express our desire and hope of each individual of the human race, would certainly include the whole. Yet a man destitute of such desires, hopes and prayers, we should not look upon as possessing a gospel spirit, or such a friend to souls as the gospel requires. What should we think of a man that would say, I

desire most of these may be in the greatest misery to all eternity?

THE prayers of good men for their most malicious enemies, for the vilest creatures in the world; such as the prayers of David, and that of Stephen when he was dying, under a shower of malice from his enemies and the enemies of God; these prayers, I say, were not without faith, and a good foundation of faith; and of consequence, were heard and answered of God. Yet, if any are to be eternally damned in their own persons, we should imagine that such malicious persecutors, and murderers would certainly be found among them. We should think that the murderers of Christ, at least some of the many thousands combined in that most malicious of all sins, would be objects of God's eternal wrath; but it is as certain they were all forgiven, as it is that the prayers of Christ were always answered, and all his petitions granted at all times. *“And I knew that thou hearest me always:”* John xi. 42.

If it were possible for people to divest themselves of the long, deep, and rooted prejudices arising from the *limitarian* scheme, every man would most clearly see that we have no foundation or warrant, in reason or scripture, to pray as good people ever have done, or as Christ did for the vilest of men, for their pardon and eternal salvation, but a warrant of this nature, viz. It is the will of God and our Savior, it is his will, without any equivocation or collusion, that all men

shall be saved, and, in his own way and time, come to the knowledge of the truth ; and that consistent with his truth, holiness and greatest honor, by a proper atonement ; as Christ gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due times, or fit seasons. 1. Tim. ii.

IF we were to single out any one of the multitude combined in the murder of Jesus, as being the worst of all, perhaps we should pitch upon Judas to be the man. And he indeed met with an awful and aggravated damnation, in the highest sense of the term, in the true scripture meaning of it, as it relates to any mere man personally. What this his damnation or perdition was, I have before shewn. But it is just as certain that he was forgiven of God, in his own time, and all the rest of the horrible, blind, malicious multitude, as that Jesus cried to his Father with his dying breath, "*Father forgive them ; for they know not what they do.*"

CHRIST never made but one conditional prayer, and that he made for this special reason, to leave an everlasting testimony to the world, that sin, whether actual or imputed, could never be discharged without a full satisfaction to the divine law. That prayer related to his own sufferings, and was introduced with an hypothesis, and closed with full submission to the will of God. See Mat. xxvi. and other parallel records in the evangelists. All the rest of his prayers were peremptory, without any condition. On the ground of his atonement, all having the

force of a just and absolute demand. "Father I will," is the tenor of all the prayers that ever Christ made for guilty men.

It is proper for us further to consider, that God will accomplish the highest glory of his own attributes; and that it is certain, they are all more glorified in the salvation, than in the personal damnation of any sinner, or every sinner on earth.

IN the salvation of such vile, guilty creatures as we are, every divine attribute doth shine most gloriously, and all in perfect harmony. No attributes are more glorious than the infinite pity and mercy of God to sinners, with his power and good will to save them freely. This most blessed part of the divine character is not seen, it makes no discovery of itself with regard to many millions, on the *limitarian* scheme. Neither can the holiness and justice of God, ever shine so gloriously bright in the personal damnation of any sinner, or of all the poor sinners in the world, as in the great atonement, exacting full satisfaction of a personage infinitely greater and dearer to God than any mere man, or all the mere human race. If you leave room, in the glorious plan of our redemption, for all to be personally damned, you take away all the glory of it: And you derogate from this glory, in just proportion, as you hold, that any number shall be personally damned, be that number more or less.

THAT doctrine which represents all sin, all moral evil, in the most odious and abominable aspect, has thence, one evidence of being a true doctrine.

THERE is no other understanding of the word, nature, and character of God, that makes opposition to him and rebellion against him, appear so full of mischief, and ingratitude, as this I am pleading for. To oppose such a God, as I consider JEHOVAH to be, on this plan of creating, governing and redeeming the world; how abominable! All the glorious attributes of God would be effectually obstructed, in their displays and operations; and the whole creation, that wonderful child of divine love, would suffer the most barbarous murder, if sinners might have their perverse wills gratified, in all their necessary consequences. The infinite, eternal fountain of love, being and blessedness, would be wholly dried up; and rebellion against such a character, would leave nothing but consummate woe and misery in the universe. To rebel against infinite power and knowledge, if united with a disposition opposite to that of infinite love, (could such a being exist) would not be like rebelling against our infinitely kind and merciful, heavenly Father. To rebel against the cruelest tyrant that ever was clothed with despotic power, might be a perilous thing; but not like rebelling against the kindest, most compassionate and loving ruler that a happy people was ever blessed with.

WILL not every man on earth agree with me in this one point, at least, that no other doctrine ever advanced, can make sin against God, hatred of God and opposition to him, look and feel so horribly as the doctrine I maintain? For surely the nature and native tendency of sin is wholly to overthrow a God, so infinitely glorious and amiable as JEHOVAH, in this view appears, and to stifle in the birth all his emanations of being and felicity. This is the nature of all sin, and not the less odious and abominable, because God counteracts the whole by his almighty power and love; but the odiousness of sin is rather enhanced and aggravated for this very reason. The real nature and disposition of our God is, to emanate being and blessedness far and wide, and that forevermore. The nature of sin is to obstruct all this, and therefore no words can express the odiousness of it. For sin is to be infinitely hated only for its nature. Merely as an event, it belongs to the pure and holy plan, and good government of Deity: Who, even in infinite love and goodness, saw fit not to hinder the existence of it, however infinitely hateful; and will certainly turn it all to good account, (even contrary to its nature) to the greatest happiness of his creatures. Thus the whole system of being shall, in the result of all, be the perfection of love and happiness.

BUT, were the moral disposition of a Supreme Being such as to propagate some hap-

pineness and abundance of misery, and that eternal, though, in regard to his absolute property in all things (which I have often mentioned) we might not accuse him of injustice ; yet most of his creatures could do no other than lament their fate in bitter howlings and deepest agonies of soul, because being and misery had been forced upon them. Our glory and blessedness lies in this, that JEHOVAH is what he is. " I AM THAT I AM." To be disaffected to such a God, oh, how criminal !

MOREOVER, that salvation is ensured to sinners, by the death of Christ, without the least dependence on any qualifications in them ; but, on the contrary, that all the qualifications necessary to their enjoyment of the benefit are insured by his death, is manifest expressly from Heb. ix. as well as from the whole tenor of the gospel. A testator insures the legacy, at his death, without any regard at all to the present disposition, or even the knowledge of any one of the legatees. He has made the testament, and, when he dies, it becomes unalterable, and the heirs take the benefit, whenever it comes to their knowledge. This is the idea of the apostle to the Hebrews, on this point. To the same purpose he writes Titus iii. 4, 5, 6. " After that the love and kindness of God towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done ; but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy

Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." So it every where appears from the holy scriptures, that the atonement, in all cases, insures qualifications, or the application of the whole benefit; and *not that our qualifications insure an atonement*, in our behalf; that the undertaking and purchase of Christ is at the bottom of all, leads in the whole of the salvation of sinners, makes all sure; and that the whole application and all qualifications are but consequences, through the kingly and prophetic offices of Christ, co-extensive with his priestly impetration.

No man on earth can ever obtain assurance of his safe estate, or any good hope towards God, on any other foundation than the real and universal grace of God. For, while believing, penitent sinners are laboring to build any hope at all, on good distinctions, and good qualifications in themselves, they can find nothing but what points them out for eternal destruction. And they will sink deeper and deeper in despair, in this way, as they look deeper and deeper into their hearts and lives for any ground of hope. God, and he alone is "the hope of Israel and Savior thereof, in the day of trouble." "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." In such a God and such a Savior, the vilest sinner on earth may find comfort and salvation. "Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God and not man, the Holy One in the midst of thee."

WE may add, that this understanding of divine revelation, not only leaves the holy bible free from all contradictions and inconsistencies ; but also takes away the main ground of all *deistical* scruples and doubts.

MANY are inclined to deism, under the light of divine revelation, because they see such an infinite variety of opinions among revelationists, innumerable different sects among those, who in common, hold the sacred bible for their rule of faith. They are all alike concerned in the great things contained therein, and alike sincere and honest in what they profess to believe ; yet, there is such variety of opinion, and such opposition of sentiment, in many points, many are thence inclined to doubt whether the doctrine of such a special revelation is not wholly groundless ; and so fall away into infidelity.

ON my plea, all this inducement to deism is removed. We consider the all-wise and sovereign God, as enlightening mankind in various measures and degrees, in his own time, way and manner. All are right in some degree, more or less, and none but what have much darkness mixed with the best light they have. All agree in one, as far as light is given to each respectively. They differ not, on the account of their knowledge of the bible, so far as they understand it ; but only for want of more knowledge of it, and a better understanding of its true meaning. Thus all sects in the world, all opinionists, however diverse in

many things, do indeed conspire and unite in confirming the truth of the sacred bible.

WHEN I hear all that *papists* say of religion, though I perceive great ignorance and darkness in them; yet I have thence great confirmation that there is indeed a special revelation from God, and that the same is contained in the old and new testaments. When I find *mahometans* defending the old testament, though they deny the new, I am by them confirmed in the truth of both. Yea, when I hear any *pagans* in the world, talk about their own religion, (for none are without religion) I easily see something they have derived from the bible, in some indirect way or other: Even as we have light from the sun by way of the moon, and many other media of reflection; all witnessing alike that there is a sun. So every sect of pagans on earth confirm me in my faith. I find they are all taught of God, as the bible teaches, so far as they are taught at all. Their many errors are all owing to negative considerations. i. e. Where light extends no further, darkness will remain on their minds. So far as God has been pleased to lead them to the knowledge of truth, they are right; and in all beside they must be wrong. So when I take a view of the great variety of opinions among *protestants*, whom I look upon more enlightened than any other people in the world; they all confirm me in the belief that the bible is from God; though they greatly vary in many things, and op-

pose one another in points almost endless to name.

IF I am right in my understanding of God's design and method, his merciful and wise plan of operation to save a guilty world by his dear Son; then my faith is justly confirmed by all these things, which, on any other principles, will tend greatly to confound the mind. On any other Scheme of salvation, a very few there be, but what are destined to eternal, unutterable torments. Who alas! are those few that shall escape? *All are damned by each other*; and I think with equal authority. But, blessed be God, the great Judge is THE SAVIOR OF ALL MEN, and hath taken away the sin of the whole world.

I AM edified, and comforted by every serious, honest man, that I hear talk upon his religion, whatever degrees of light God hath been pleased to give him, be they more or less. I am most edified where there is most light; but truly the light is sweet, even in the least degrees of it. I find something from God given to every sect, and party; and that gives me delight. So it is with me, and so it must be with all that receive divine revelation in this light. Which, I think, is one mark that it is the true light, in which we ought to understand it; as it bears the stamp of its divine Author, who "is the true light, which LIGHTETH EVERY MAN that cometh into the world." And oh! what charity, love, and mutual friendship must flow from such a view of God and his

ways! This is that charity which is the bond of perfectness.

THERE is no other doctrine of grace, that will so encourage the use of all the means of grace and salvation, and so enforce upon our minds the fitness and propriety of all the institutions of the gospel.

I CONSIDER the whole divine plan connected indissolubly: All made sure; not in any distinction of means and end; but all in one indissoluble chain. So that it is as true and proper to say, that none can be saved without regeneration, repentance, faith, and holiness, as to say that the extreme link in any chain cannot be drawn forward, by an hand at the opposite end of the chain, unless every link in the same chain is moved. It is always true, and always will be, that he that believeth not shall be damned, and is indeed damned personally, so long as he remain in that state. "He is condemned already;" "the wrath of God abideth on him," and will so abide, until he is brought out of that state of infidelity and impenitence.

THE greater our hope is in the use of means to obtain any important end, the greater will be our exertions in every case, without exception. Full assurance of success will excite the greatest exertions of all, provided we know that sure success is only in this way. So, when Paul told the sailors, from the mouth of an angel, that not one of their lives should be lost by the shipwreck,

Acts xxvii. they exerted themselves much the more vigorously to obey his directions afterwards, in using the means, as he told them it was the only way in which they could be saved. Every careful observer of human nature, and of the force of motives, well knows it is so in every case. If the end is very important in our view, and there is but just one way to attain it ; yet, if success in that way is altogether dubious, and most likely our labors and efforts will be all in vain, we might probably exert ourselves in some degree, though with a faint heart. But, let us know assuredly we shall attain our important end, if we will exert ourselves with all our might, and that this is the only way ; this will animate all the powers we have, and we shall engage to purpose. The case is just the same in this matter of infinite weight, as in other cases of a temporal concern ; excepting only that our exertions are excited with much greater force.

MOREOVER, the infinite reasonableness of religion and the service of God ; the unspeakable pleasure of it, and the superior reward in heaven, *in proportion* to our signal obedience and piety in this state of probation ; the great and good influence of religion and virtue, as relative to the spiritual, and even temporal good of our fellow-men, and many other considerations, too many now to specify, all recommend the careful use of the means of grace and salvation, and a life of piety and virtue in this world. In this

of piety and virtue in this world. In this way of saving sinners, God manifests his infinite wisdom and goodness in laying out for rational creatures and moral agents, work adapted to their rational, moral natures, and full of comfort, pleasure, and joy. Salvation, however, was not appointed for the means of it; but the means, for eternal salvation, which was eternally made sure, in the covenant of redemption, to that race of beings whose sin the Lamb of God came to take away.

It has ever been the sense of the most enlightened part of christians, that the doctrine of election, and of the certain perseverance of believers, were doctrines tending to engage them the more in the use of means. The doctrine of election, as I have defined it, hath a greater influence of the same kind, as it displays a more extensive love of God to men, and gives us more enlarged views of free grace, and makes poor sinners more dependent on God in every view.

IF this doctrine does indeed take hold of our souls, oh! what a sacrifice of love shall we offer to God, even our whole souls and bodies! How shall we love God and all his creatures for his sake! How shall we love our dear Savior, and all for whom he died, for his sake, whether to us friends or enemies, known or unknown, Jews or gentiles, barbarians, Scythians, bond or free! Jesus hath died for them all; he loves them all; and he will bring them all into his kingdom. He will reconcile the world to himself,

not imputing iniquity. The ends of the earth shall look unto him and be saved.

IT is another token of true gospel faith, and truly evangelical principles, that, in the exercise of them, good people find themselves happy in their own lot, and are not uneasy or envious towards others.

WHOEVER has that sense of the word of God, which I maintain, will enjoy this happiness. They are quite willing that all mankind should enjoy every favor and blessing God is pleased to bestow. They delight in the gracious communications of God, every where. If the friends of God have many blessings, they delight therein; and if they that at present know not God, abound in outward good things, they delight in God's mercy thus far towards them. They would by no means exchange their own enjoyments, whatever their circumstances may be in worldly things, for all the enjoyments of those in a state of darkness, and ignorance of the great salvation. They well know that their real happiness is as much greater than that of the unrenewed, as are the manifestations of divine light and love to their souls. They feel themselves happy in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. This is life and heaven to their souls. Their acquaintance with God is perfect peace. Their sense of the sure, final mercy of God to all men, whom indeed they ardently love, does much add to their consolation. One that loves and pities all sinners, as the gos-

pel requires, and as all that have a gospel spirit do, *cannot* feel so happy in a persuasion that most of them will be eternally damned, as they do, who believe that "God will have all men to be saved."

THEY who have that sense of God and salvation which I plead for, are exceeding happy at all times, in such a God and such a salvation. Indeed their souls desire no more. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Such well know that godliness carries its own comfort along with it, even in the present world, having promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. I am very confident in affirming, that they who know God and his salvation, in the light I have represented, will be filled with exceeding joy, and will envy no person on earth; but will rejoice in all the good that any enjoy. If this be the effect of these doctrines wrought in the heart, they are doubtless according to godliness.

I AM very sensible no man will, or ever can fully and cordially believe in such a character of God, and such a salvation, without the special energy of divine power and grace, which is fitly called regeneration. Others may have a doctrinal belief of these things, in some sense; but to feel the reality of these glorious truths in the soul, require a supernatural work on hearts so disaffected to God as ours are in a natural state. We judge of God's feelings towards us, by our

towards him, as all natural men do. Therefore, none but new creatures, can believe such glorious, astonishing truths as these, with all their hearts, without hesitation, and with joy and peace in believing. No man can be fully satisfied with this doctrine. until God has created in his soul a friendship towards himself. When he knows by experience that he loves God, he will believe that God can love sinners freely. They that truly know God, have a very different sense of the love of God, from that of a blind world, whose eyes are fast closed in infidelity.

THESE thoughts, moreover, lead us to see the great duty, and propriety of supporting, and maintaining gospel ordinances and institutions in the world, and giving all due encouragement to the best instructors in the way of salvation, that we can obtain, whether God hath been pleased to enlighten them more or less. The blessing of such instruction and ordinances is great in every view, temporal and spiritual. This is God's wise and merciful way to make us know the things freely given us of God, and to give us great present comfort in these things, and glorious hopes of eternal, consummate happiness in the life to come. No other plan of religion can ever so much animate a people, to attend the worship and ordinances of God, to hallow his sabbaths, and reverence his sanctuary, and to love their spiritual guides most cordially, and account them worthy of double honor, for their works sake, especially those who labor in word and

doctrine. In a word, these principles, if they really take hold of the heart, will have every happy effect that the gospel requires of us.

AGAIN ; It is an evidence of true, gospel doctrine, if, when cordially believed, it will make us willing and joyful that God should be at the head of the universe, *almighty, absolute Sovereign in all things, God over all, blessed forevermore* ; also if it make creatures willing to keep *their own* proper place, at the feet of JEHOVAH, and rejoice to be absolutely dependent on such a God, and at his absolute, sovereign disposal forever and ever.

THIS idea of God, and this understanding of his word, will have such a blessed effect on every believing soul. We shall see clearly, that JEHOVAH is *by nature* God, and worthy to be God over all ; and we shall exceedingly rejoice that we, and all creatures are in his hands, as the clay in the hands of the potter. We can trust him with as much joy, as safety. And we see, that all the world may well rejoice in his absolute, sovereign rule. Then we shall break out in raptures of holy joy, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." Then we shall cry out with unfeigned lips, "Praise the Lord all his works, in all places of his dominion : Bless the Lord, O my soul." When God hath given souls this understanding to know the truth, they will ex-

ceedingly rejoice that God is what he is, and that they are his creatures, in the proper relation of creatures; that is, in a state of intire, absolute, and everlasting dependence on such a being as JEHOVAH.

THE *limitarian* scheme never can have this operation on our souls. God himself has fixed his own laws, in our souls, that absolutely forbid it. *The law of nature is as really and truly the law of God, as the written word.* Those natural and inevitable feelings, which are common to all rational creatures, whether holy or sinful, whether angels or men, or of whatever rank or description, are indeed the laws of God. The whole law of nature is the law of JEHOVAH, the Author of nature; and a pure law too. By this law of God, he has made it forever absolutely impossible that any creature should cordially, without any averfion of foul, freely consent to be forever and ever in the most inexpressible pain and torment. God's law of nature cries out against it, with all the authority of the divine Being himself. Much less can any holy soul be willing to be an eternal sinner, an everlasting enemy to God, which is the grand, essential thing in that hell the *limitarians* plead for.

GOD does not fet his own laws in opposition to one another. He does not, by one law, call upon us to avoid pain and misery as much as we can, and by another bid us be pleased with it. Much less does he, by one law, command us to be holy and love

him supremely, and serve him in all holy and perfect obedience, and, by another law, command us to be quite willing to hate and rebel against him to all eternity. For us to obey two laws directly opposite, is as impossible as to serve two opposite masters. But on the plan which I support, we may, if our hearts are right, keep all the laws of God in glorious harmony, and find that, in keeping them there is great reward.

THE *limitarians* do indeed tell us, that all, under their eternal decree of reprobation, ought finally to be willing to be damned. Many of them say, that every man must be brought to this willingness, before he can be saved!! God grant them further light, that they may better understand his nature, character, and wise, harmonious laws.

ON the present plan, I can will all that God wills, and do all that God bids me, if my heart is right, and that with great alacrity and joy. I am willing to keep *my own place*, as a creature of God, and I rejoice that my God will forever keep HIS, that JEHOVAH will sit on the throne of absolute, universal government to all eternity. I rejoice that he doeth his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the world, that none can stay his hand, neither may any say unto him what doest thou? I want no security but what I have in the nature and character of God, as displayed in his works and word, through his

own Son, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.

I THINK those principles cannot be wrong that have this native effect on the soul ; nor those right, which require of us opposite things and absolute impossibilities.

I HAVE before observed, that personal damnation in hell, is not once asserted in the bible, of any particular person ; nor a word of that nature said, but what, agreeable to the whole genius and tenor of divine revelation, points to a substitute. I add, in this place, that no such thing is said even of Judas himself ; though, as the english words stand, in our translation, there is more that seems to favor such a tenet, than in any other passage of sacred writ.

IN our english bible we have the words thus, “ It had been good for that man if he had not been born.” Mat. xxvi. 24. and, in Mark xiv. 21. “ Good were it for that man if he had never been born.” Now if this translation were ever so exact and literal, it would by no means overthrow the general tenor of reasoning from the nature and word of God, which we have been led into. It might, without any unreasonable straining of words, be understood, only as one of the many awful denunciations we have of the voice of justice, all silenced and satisfied in the great surety. I appeal, however, to every learned reader, that the translation of these words is not just, nor grammatical. The following words are ex-

a˜ly literal and grammatical. "Good were it for him, if he had not been born that man," or such a man.* Much better indeed, had it been for Judas if he had not been born such a prodigy of wickedness. So much the divine spirit says. But by no means, says that Judas, or any other man, shall be a loser by existence, on the whole. This I notice by the way *as just*, though not essential to the grand argument.

IT is also evident that we have a right understanding of the character of God and his word, if we are thence affected with holy fear and trembling, mixed with holy joy and engagedness of heart to serve God.

THIS sense of God and salvation, now maintained, hath certainly such an effect on the soul. To think of such a God, whose absolute property we are : To consider what sinners we indeed are, and how justly deserving of his awful wrath and vengeance to all eternity : And that we can do nothing to help ourselves, and no creature can help us : That all our hope originates from the nature and sovereign purpose, and decree of God, utterly contrary to all our deserts : To think what we must be to all eternity, if justice should only take place upon us, (and let God do what he will with us, we can never

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* καλὸν ἦν αὐτῷ, εἰ ἂν ἐκ ἐγεννήθη ὁ αὐ-

θρωπῶς ἑξέινος.

open our mouths with any charge of injustice on the absolute Proprietor of all things) this will fill our whole souls with fear and trembling. Also, to find the nature and disposition of the great and terrible God so displayed in his word, as to see that *this*, and *this* alone, is our full and everlasting security : That our everlasting safety lies in the nature of the great God, and no where else : This I say, will fill us with exceeding joy, and engage us earnestly in all the means of salvation, which such a great and glorious God hath appointed. Knowing that this awful and endearing JEHOVAH saves, *only in his own way* ; how thankful shall we be that he has told us the way, and marked out the path ! Most certainly, this will make us work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We shall indeed serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

No view we can have of the way of salvation, but this, will affect us with that undissembled, unfeigned humility, which the gospel requires. But this will make us esteem others better than ourselves, and that without any compliment at all ; not only some others, but, in the natural sense of the phrase, others in the general view.

EVERY man that feels the truth and force of this doctrine, will really feel and know that he is worse than other men, yea, than any other man that ever had existence ; because he knows so much more of himself

than of any other man ; also, because the belief of this doctrine is attended with real, gospel charity towards all men, even that charity which hopeth all things. Such a sense of God and salvation, and such a view of himself, will make any man cry out, in the utmost sincerity, and without so much as the shadow of a compliment, surely I am more brutish than any man : I have not the understanding of a man : I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy : I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.

SUCH indeed is the very nature of all mankind, that, while they build their confidence of God's eternal favor, on good marks, and good distinctions in themselves ; and thence conclude they shall be saved and most others damned, it will feed their pride, and puff their souls up with haughtiness. They may say what they please, of "*mere grace,*" "*mere favor,*" "*free grace,*" "*free favor :*" Not the less proud will they be for all this ; but quite the reverse.

NOTHING in the universe hath a more powerful operation on human souls, to make them proud, than that great, exalted, renowned personages have singled them out as special favorites. A full confidence that the infinitely exalted JEHOVAH hath done it, will make every man, while in this world, feel just as the pharisee did, when moved by the same inward sentiment. Merely a sense of the greatest favors will make no man proud ; but bring in the idea of comparison and distinction,

and it will make every man so, while under the moral infirmities of nature which attend us in the present world. But on my plea, every valley is filled, and every mountain and hill is brought low, and the crooked is made strait, and the rough places plain, and the Lord alone is exalted. This will bring down every high thought and imagination, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of Christ, and bring all into subjection to the obedience of faith.

It is very natural for many to make inferences, and draw consequences from what is said concerning the salvation of mankind, and apply the same to other ranks and orders of beings, which we know little, or nothing about.

Thus, they apply these doctrines to the case of the miserable, fallen angels. I think we proceed upon very uncertain ground, in all such reasonings and applications. God has been pleased to acquaint us a little, and but a very little, with any other intelligent creatures, whether holy or unholy, but those of our own rank and order, our fellow men. Yet, as it does, in certain respects, concern our duty and practice in this world, to know something of holy angels, and also of evil angels, we are made so far acquainted with their respective dispositions and circumstances as relates to our practice, and no farther.

We are taught, that many of the angels have been very sinful and very miserable a

great while, and that they are very assiduous, crafty, and malicious to oppose the happiness of the human race, and promote all the sin and misery they can. We are told that the holy angels are of a direct contrary disposition and character. And we are taught, in the word of God, how to conduct ourselves relative to both. This is as much as God hath seen fit to reveal to us on this subject. I have often thought, that the immodesty of mankind is as much discovered in many positive assertions about the angels, as in any one thing.

THIS, however, I suppose we may say concerning the miserable, condemned angels, that they are as great sinners, as we by nature are, in proportion to the quantity of being they possess; and greater sinners than we are by nature, only in consideration that they are of an higher rank than we, and have a greater measure of existence; but less sinners than we in one very capital view. For they have not sinned against a KINSMAN REDEEMER, and the proclamations of such a gospel as we have despised.

WE may also say, that even to this day (for ought we know) they have as much cause of eternal despair as the human kind once had, during the space between the moment of our original rebellion, and the first intimation of a Savior: That they justly deserve endless damnation, by the very nature of their criminality, as well as we: And that they will certainly be eternally damned, in the voice of justice, and we

know of no declaration of grace that relates to them, any more than the human kind once did, with regard to miserable, *damned*, or *condemned* sinners, of our own order.

WE may further say, that God can certainly do them no wrong, any more than he can us. If their misery is endless, or if ours had been so; the will of God is necessarily just, and the only standard of all justice and righteousness, for this grand, all important reason, which I would not so often repeat, were it not of the utmost consequence that it should sink deep into our souls and never be unthought of, viz. his absolute, underived, universal, and everlasting property in all things.

IF we say more than the above, I apprehend, we do no honor thereby to our profession of gospel humility: Or rather, that we transgress in exercising ourselves in great matters, or things too high for us, that we know not; and darken counsel by words without knowledge. Who can say that the same God who found a way for our recovery, can find none for theirs, throughout an interminable eternity? Or who can say, that even our own all-sufficient Savior will not, in some way, unknown to us at present, be found hereafter the Head of ALL principalities and powers, in a more gracious sense than we have imagined, even in an infinitely merciful sense to the father, the devil, as well as to his children? Who can say that a Savior, of such unsearchable riches of grace, such boundless wisdom and

power, will not, in his own way and time, make every knee bow to him, in one and the same sense, and every tongue confess, from one and the same spirit, that he is Lord of all to the glory of God the Father? Who can say that God will not, in some future period of endless duration, *gather together in ONE, ALL things in Christ, both in heaven and on earth and under the earth*, in the most plain and simple understanding of the terms? Who can say, that he will never wholly conquer death, though it be the last enemy, and shall survive every other conquest of his; even death, in the most common, scripture sense of the word, including spiritual death, which includes all sinfulness, as well as natural death?

Who can say, that the greatest sufferers, and those who are thrown into the greatest distress and horror, save ONE, shall be on the whole losers by their having been called into being, by the almighty power of God, who is love? Since it is certain that the greatest of all sufferers, and he who, in a legal view, was justly charged with the greatest guilt, is the greatest gainer of all creatures by his existence. I here speak just as our most enlightened, and most orthodox divines have always spoken. They all agree in the perfect holiness and purity of the man Christ Jesus, in a personal sense; yet, in a vicarious sense, and as by the covenant of redemption he stood related to the divine law, they all agree, he was justly charged with the greatest guilt of any

creature that ever God made, even the fins of the whole world. As he stood related to pain and punishment he never had an equal. And this is the great, essential, capital doctrine of divine revelation, whereby the bible is most of all distinguished from all other books. I say since this greatest of all sufferers, on account of sin, is the greatest gainer of all the creatures of God by his existence, on the whole, who can say God cannot deal in a similar way with all who suffer on account of sin? For whether you are an original debtor, or a surety, there is no difference as to your just obligation to pay the debt.

ARE we not rather immodest and arrogant, when we positively affirm, that we certainly know, God has called into existence innumerable myriads of intelligent creatures to be extremely miserable, to endless duration, under his own fixed eternal decree? God indeed saw it best, on the whole, that much evil should take place, both moral and natural; otherwise he certainly would have hindered it. But who can say that God himself, with all his wisdom, power and love, is not able to answer all the wise, good, and glorious purposes he designed, by the existence of all evil, moral and natural; yet so as to leave not one of his offspring a loser by existence?

As to the man Jesus Christ, he had ten thousand times more guilt to answer for, than any other man in the world, and no doubt more than any miserable, fallen angel.

And he was just as much obligated to suffer pain, misery, and punishment, as if it had been personal ; yet that man Christ Jesus is, on the whole, the most dignified and happy creature that ever God made. " Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross ; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name : That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in the earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 8, &c. " For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Do we know enough about the extent of divine wisdom, power and love, to affirm that most, or even any of God's own offspring shall be infinite losers by existence irresistibly forced upon them, by the infinitely kind Fountain of all being and blessedness ? When we get so far beyond our line in reasoning, we tread on very uncertain ground. Let us then let the fallen angels alone. But if any of us must needs enquire more about the eternal fate of the angels that fell ; it is well for us to remember that they are our superiors, in the scale of creation, and stand related to us as the offspring of the great, common Fountain of

being; and are no worse than we in their temper and disposition, only as no mediator hath operated on their minds, as upon ours, in a way of restraint, or by any kind, or gracious operation, as upon the human kind ever since the fall.

CHILDREN are to hate their father the devil, only as they are to hate their natural parents and all their fellow men, and even themselves. *Not with personal hatred; not with feelings of malevolence; not as creatures of God; but all in them morally evil in its own nature, all that is opposite to the moral nature or character of the common Fountain of being.* Thus we are to hate father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea, and our own life also; and thus, and in no other way, we ought to hate every thing in which moral evil appears. But if we feel any malevolence towards the devil, as a creature of God, or wish him evil; we feel towards him as he does towards us, and shew his moral likeness in this our malevolence, as might be expected from devils only. If we wish the fallen angels may all remain eternally damned, and that the common Parent of all may never display and glorify his great name in their deliverance, from enmity, sin and pain, even if he is able to do it; if we heartily wish they may be the objects of almighty vengeance to endless duration, then, *we feel towards them, as they do towards us.*

If our natural parents are very wicked, and, by necessary consequences, very misfe-

rable, we do well to wish, that God, of his infinite power and grace, would make them better and happier. We know he can do it, if he pleases. And since we know not, but that infinite wisdom, power, and mercy can, if God please, take hold of our infernal parents ; we shew a spirit too much like theirs, in wishing they may continue to endless duration, in all their sins and in all their torments. It is certain the great JEHOVAH may, in pure justice, leave them so forever ; the very nature of their sinfulness does merit this, by every rule of pure righteousness, without any consideration in the universe separate from the very nature of sin. And God might have left us in like manner, and in the like pure justice. But, for my part, I am quite willing God should make me holy and happy, for the glory of his own name, and all my fellow sinners without exception, if he please. I am willing the Lord should be thus “ *good unto ALL,*” and his tender mercies thus be over all his works, which are capable of holiness and happiness.

IF we knew ourselves better than we do, we should not look upon ourselves, by nature, so unlike to the fallen angels as we are apt to imagine. I think it, however, our wisdom to enquire no more about any order of beings, than we have some *data*, some means of knowledge to assist our enquiries ; and no more about the devils than may concern our practice, that we may not bear their image, and may guard against their malice and evil influence.

AND now, to take up another thought, I apprehend that the way of salvation I am defending, has this further mark of truth. *It exhibits God to our view, as conducting the affairs of our salvation analogous to all his other conduct.*

THE all-wise and good God does influence, move, and govern all his creatures, in a way suitable to the natures and faculties he hath given them. This is to be seen every where, and in every thing. With regard to all our temporal enjoyments, though they are the objects of his eternal decree, made eternally sure in his all-glorious, immutable plan ; yet he gives us all these things, in a way suitable to our natures, as rational creatures and free moral agents, by the exercise of our minds and bodies, that we may have, at all times, proper exercise ; for this is wholly necessary to our felicity. This is all the reason why God does not give us all our food immediately fit for eating, and all our raiment ready to put on : If he did so, we should be without that exertion and employment suited to our natures as active creatures, and necessary to our comfort. Therefore, though our exertions are required, it is not to make these enjoyments more sure to us, than he could have otherwise made them, or than even his eternal decree made them. It is just so with regard to our salvation. The means are all laid out for us, and enjoined upon us, and connected with the end, just as much as in all temporal things, only because this gives proper exer-

cise to the immortal soul, attended with unspeakable pleasure and delight; and is suited to our rational natures, and the relation we stand in to God. Our working out our own salvation, is only a reasonable duty, not preceding the certainty of it, in God's view; but following as a fit and happy *consequence*, in his eternal plan, and in the order of his communication of blessedness made sure before the foundation of the world.

So there is every reason, and all manner of fitness, that we should inculcate upon all mankind, the use of the means of grace and salvation, that can possibly be in any case in the universe. It is our reasonable, fit, and happy service, and not only with regard to all the powers of our souls, but of the whole man, even our bodies also. Hence did Paul say, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Rom. xii.

It is proper to say, in every case in the universe, and in every case alike true, that the actions and exertions of creatures never alter the previous and eternal certainty of any thing; neither did God design them for any such end, or with any such view. God has ordered and commanded all the duties that are to be done by all his creatures, to carry into effect, and to accomplish his own fixed, good and merciful decrees, in the only fit way, that is, in a way suited to

the natures he has given them, and in certain connection with the end. All these are in the immutable universal system, as much as the end. Hence we see the great propriety of God's encouragements and promises to the virtuous and obedient ; and of his threatenings to the vicious and rebellious. They are all suited to the nature of man. And hence we see how fit it is, that obedience and virtue should be attended with delight and joy, as it always is ; and that all sin should be attended, or rebuked with pain and sorrow, which never fails to be the case.

THEY, whom God has set up in this world to rule and govern mankind, should, under him, enact good and wholesome laws, in favor of all virtue, and good conduct ; and in terrible opposition to all wickedness, all that opposeth the nature of God, and the good and happiness of the creatures of God. This is exceeding fit and proper among men, wisely adapted to their natures. The Most High, no doubt, could suppress vice and iniquity in some other way ; but none appears to us so well adapted to the natures of men. Hence there is every reason for rulers and ruled, to unite in the most vigorous efforts for the best possible civil government.

THIS view of the way of God, and this understanding of his revealed will, is supported, in that it opens to our sight another grand doctrine of revelation. Which is, *the amazing unreasonableness of sin, and sin-*

ners ; and how they will pervert all truth and reason, to the vilest purposes.

MANY will say, if all these things are so, if all things, all events, are eternally made certain ; men and devils are not to blame for their sins : Just as though the blame of sin did not lie in the nature of it. Many will say, if salvation is finally secured, as here represented, then it is very eligible for men to indulge all their lusts in this world, and live in all manner of vice, as they please : Just as though vice and wickedness were attended with happiness : Not considering, that perfection of wickedness, with its inseparable connections, does in very deed, make the whole hell that the *limitarians* plead for ; or that rectitude and virtue in its perfection, does, in very deed, make the heavenly happiness we hope for. They are so blind and unreasonable, as not to see that if sinfulness, or hell, which are for substance the same thing, are not hateful and horrible in this world, they cannot be hereafter ; and that if virtue, holiness, or heaven, which are essentially the same thing, are not desirable in this world, they cannot be in the world to come.

THIS plan, moreover, helps us to the best possible solution of the question, which so often arises among men. *Why did God ever bring moral evil into his eternal plan, or suffer it to exist ?* For, upon this plan, we see that God doth so display and exercise his own perfections, in opposing the nature of sin

and *its effects*, as we cannot see he otherwise might have done. And we also find many exercises of mind; many employments and efforts laid out for his rational creatures, in opposing sin and its awful attendants and consequences, in obedience to God; and much exercise of humility, and thankfulness. and all graces which we can see no room for had God's eternal plan been otherwise.

THIS doctrine is further supported, by the doctrine of God's unlimited wisdom and power.

ALL will allow, that if all the good ends could have been answered and accomplished, without the eternal misery of a multitude of mankind, then it had been better, and then God would have chosen it; because all grant, that such misery is, in its nature, a great evil, and very undefirable, yea very horrible. To suppose that God could not have answered all these glorious ends, without this eternal misery of so many creatures, is to suppose that he was limited by the very nature of things; or that it could not, in the nature of things have been otherwise. But, pray, what is the nature of things? And whence does the nature of things originate? Certainly from God and his attributes only. For in that period of duration when there was nothing existent but God, where was the nature of things, or the necessity of nature, but in God only?

To suppose there was any limitation upon the eternal Being, when no other being

did exist, is to suppose that his own infinite, unlimited attributes did limit, and set bounds to his conduct, or to the emanations of his infinite love and benevolence. It is to say, that God would have done better if he could; but that he could not: He acted out himself with as much kindness as he could, and wished to have been more kind, had it been possible, in the nature of things; that is, in the nature of his own perfections, which give nature to all things else: That his infinite wisdom, power and love, could do no better than to exhibit a system glorious in the main; but at the expence of the unutterable, endless misery of countless myriads of his own offspring. This lays a limitation on the Most High, arising from his own attributes; because thence flows the whole nature of things, as their nature cannot flow from non-entity.

BUT, a just idea of the great God is this, he can indeed do all that the infinite goodness of his heart is disposed to do; and he never gave a nature to things to obstruct the emanations of his love. "*What his soul desireth even that he doeth.*"

THE *limitarians* suppose God hath formed a system as full of happiness as was possible, and a glorious system on the whole. That he would have kept out of this system the eternal misery of any creature, if he had been able; but was not able, through the necessity of his own attributes, so to do; therefore formed the best system he could.

A system much better than none, and even good on the whole, in a high degree. How does this correspond with just conceptions of JEHOVAH, God Almighty, all-wise, and infinite love?

It is in vain to say here, that this argument would equally exclude out of the system, all the moral and penal evil that ever did exist, or ever will. Because, on the *gospel plan*, according to my sense of it, all the evil of every kind that hath existed, or shall exist, is real good in the whole connection; not only to the *system in general*, but to *every individual* in it, capable of rational happiness. No one shall be less happy, on the whole, than if no evil had ever taken place. Moral and natural evil never did, or shall exist, at the expence (if I may so speak) of any one of the creatures of love, or of God who is love. Eternity is long enough, to make every creature as happy on the whole, as if there had never been any experience of evil of any kind; at least, we can by no means prove the contrary. That sentiment of the poet has ever been admired—

“The blest to day, is as compleatly so,
As who began a thousand years ago.”

CREATURES may suffer evil a great while, yet have as long duration before them to be happy in, as if they had never tasted of evil. To say that any duration of evil, or any degree of it, certainly, makes some deduction, and a proportionable deduction from our quantity of happiness, though it may after-

wards commence and be endless thenceforth, is to say more than any creature can know ; unless we can find a creature who comprehends eternity and all things belonging to it. It is also saying, what stands in full opposition to the common sense, and faith of the protestant world, in several other cases. Take only the following well known instance instead of many.

WE all believe that the saint that last goes to heaven, shall have as great a reward of free grace, as the saint that first went thither ; provided their moral characters are equal in this life. Of this we doubt not, and the scripture is full to the purpose. We also agree in the opinion of the eternal, progressive happiness of the saints in heaven, and that they who went there several thousand years ago, are far advanced in glory and blessedness beyond those who go there at this day ; and further still before those, who may go to heaven thousands of years hence. All this we believe, also, that all equal characters shall have an equal reward of glory in heaven, whether they live and die sooner or later. “ I will give unto this last even as unto thee :” “ The first shall be last and the last shall be first :” i. e. all equal on the whole, if their moral characters and services have been so in this world. These are points not controverted among protestants. Yet it is easy to see, that the same objection, if any, lies against this doctrine, as against what I have asserted, viz. that experience of evil, for a given time, may be

consistent with the same quantity of happiness in endless duration, as if the evil had never been suffered.*

I WOULD, indeed, never be positive, when I reason about infinity and eternity, which are incomprehensible to all beings, but God himself. And I only mention this instance,

* Suppose a rational creature to exist any given period of time, more or less, in great misery, and then, at the end of that certain period, to exist just as much longer in as great pleasure and happiness, so as exactly to counterbalance all his former pain and make him even on the whole, neither a gainer or loser by his existence thus far. Then suppose it to be the good will of his Maker, to continue him in being to endless duration, in a state of progressive happiness. Suppose also, that it is the pleasure of the Most High to create another, of equal capacity, at the moment when the former has arrived at the end of the second period aforementioned, viz. at that moment when he is just as well off, and no better than if he had never been created. Let these two beings exist thenceforward to endless duration, in equal degrees of progressive happiness, and it is easy to see that both, on the whole, shall be just alike happy, i. e. the former will be, at the moment of his counterbalance, in the self same predicament, in this respect, as if he had been created that very moment. So that it is evident enough, that if our uncontroverted opinion, that all equal characters in this world shall have equal happiness in the eternal world, whether they are born sooner or later, be true; then it is true, that a rational creature may suffer great pains, for any given period of time, and yet be so far from being a loser by existence, that he may be just as great a gainer thereby, on the whole, as any other creature of equal capacity who never tasted of any evil at all, and who hath his beginning of existence in a later period of duration. I beg none would imagine from this remark, that I think the great JEHOVAH bound in justice to repay any of his creatures for their pains, by an equal balance of happiness. I have no idea of any such demand of the clay on the great Potter, or of any creature on his Maker. The will of JEHOVAH is necessarily just, and the only criterion, rule and standard of all righteousness. Let men or angels be in whatever predicament they may, it is the will of God that hath placed them there, and they may not impeach their Maker of injustice, or by any means make on him a claim of reward. I only take refuge in the infinite sovereignty of the divine will, flowing out of the INFINITE GOODNESS OF THE DIVINE NATURE. To know what this is, I turn to all his works, and to his revealed will.

as I might many more, to shew, that the objection I am refuting, is built on no certain foundation ; and that in the fair application of it, it must overthrow many articles of faith in which we are all well agreed, and bring into confusion the *limitarian* scheme as well as any other adopted by christians.

BUT it is plain, at first view, that, if innumerable of the offspring of God, rational creatures which he hath called into being, or even any number of them, are in extreme sufferings to endless duration, in that case, they must be infinite losers by that existence, which the God of love forced upon them. Yet even on this supposition we might not impeach the *justice* and righteousness of the absolute, sovereign Proprietor of all things. But, I would ask my reader, is this your idea of the true character of the GOD OF LOVE, God who is love, even in the abstract ; or of Christ, who so loved the world, that he gave himself a ransom for all ?

IT may here be added. On the *limitarian* plan, they who are saved will be saved by their own works, being justified by their own works, in Paul's sense of justification by works, or in any other possible sense in which we can conceive of any such justification. Yea, *they are saved by their own merit, so far as we can have any notion of merit in a creature.*

ALL the idea we can possibly have of merit in creatures, or claim on the Deity by

any good works, is the following : That there is something good in the creature, which God considers as a condition of his salvation ; and which in the order of nature, precedes his security of eternal life. The question is not, whether we are wholly dependent on the free grace of God for all this good in us, and all these conditions and terms of justification and salvation ? We all agree, that every creature is absolutely and entirely dependent on God, for all good of every kind, both inherent and external. If we consider any good in us, whether faith, repentance, holiness, or any thing else, as a term or condition, previous to which, *as a condition in God's view*, he hath not made eternal life sure to us ; we arrogate to ourselves all the claim of merit that can possibly enter into the proud heart of a sinner, and all that Paul so much opposeth ; we claim to ourselves every thing that man can possibly boast of, unless we claim entire independency of God, which no man ever pretended to.

To say we have, indeed, certain good qualifications, and certain good distinctions, *through grace*, which give us claim to salvation ; is to say all that the proud pharisees ever did say, and all that the proudest man on earth ever did, or can say ; even though we are ever so ready to own, that God freely gave us all these good qualifications and distinctions. But the feelings of a soul are exceedingly different, who considers salvation made sure to him, by God in Christ, under

the idea of a most ungodly wretch, and without any distinction of good in him more than in any man on earth, or any fallen angel in hell ; that God justified him in Christ as *ungodly*, wholly so, and then sent him all the distinctions, all the qualifications of repentance, faith, &c. merely in a way of application of that salvation which, with God, was made sure to him before the world began.

It is certain we can form no other idea of salvation by works, or merit in a creature, than this, viz. That God, by his own free grace, hath made some good and valuable distinctions in that creature, hath freely bestowed some good qualifications, making that creature better than some others ; and then that God on that consideration, bestows eternal life ; and that the good he hath already bestowed is a condition that binds him so to do.

EVERY one who thinks he has got hold of a distinguishing, or special promise made under a condition, will readily acknowledge that it was wholly owing to the grace of God, that ever he come up to the condition. Faith, repentance, holiness, and all those things that are called terms and conditions of salvation, are wholly of the free grace of God, as we all grant. Yet, all these are good works in the creature ; yea, the chief, the capital of good works. Now, to say that we may plead our title to salvation, as grounded on any of these, or all these, is only to offer the plainest and greatest plea of

merit in us, or of our own works, that any man ever did offer or rely upon. To own we had our qualifications, which we plead as conditions of the promises, from God, only in a way of mere grace, does not militate in the least against all the pride and confidence of our own merit ; but does rather enhance it, as I have shewn before. The more distinguishing notice we imagine God has taken of us, to make us better than other men, the more we shall feel like the pharisee in the temple. Indeed there is no salvation, on the *limitarian* plan ; but the same that was so pleasing to that devout pharisee.

BUT, on the GOSPEL PLAN, the idea, and the feelings of the heart are quite different. Christ alone is our security for eternal life, wholly distinct from all conditions or qualifications *in us*. Our hope is laid up in heaven. Jesus Christ is our life. He hath taken away the sin of the world, even before we knew any thing about it : And now, by his holy spirit, sends to us the means of salvation, and makes them operate effectually on our souls, to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. He first infuses salvation, and then makes the application of the benefit, in his own way ; which is the only reasonable and proper way, the only way adapted to the rational natures he has given us. God looks on no terms, no conditions in poor sinners, however believing and penitent they are ; nor on their inward holiness, otherwise than

as fit gradations he himself is taking, to apply to them that eternal salvation which, *with him*, was equally sure to them in their very worst estate. “ If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son : Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Rom. v. 10. He that gave himself a ransom for all, will take his own way and time to make the application ; but the day, shall come when without a single exception, “ the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come with songs to Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.”

It is a certain truth, that good qualifications and valuable distinctions, conferred by a sovereign God on his rational creatures, will always operate in a way of pride and haughtiness, if they consider these as terms and conditions obliging God to confer great things on them in future ; how much soever they may acknowledge free grace in all these excellent endowments. It is equally certain, that all these graces will operate in a way of meekness and humility, if considered only as God’s fit and proper means, or gradations to confer benefits, founded on Christ as the only condition, and his atonement as the only foundation to make them sure. Thus, although there will be great distinctions of grace and glory in heaven to all eternity, among the redeemed race, they who have

most glory there, will excel others as much in the grace of heavenly meekness, as in any thing else. They will cast down the brightest crowns ; and in doing this, will bow, with the most lowly reverence, before the throne of the great and glorious Sovereign of all.

It may not be amiss here to resume a thought before suggested, with some addition. I have said that, on the *limitarian* plan of salvation, the old covenant with Adam, and the new covenant in the gospel are entirely one and the same, in every thing essential or material ; the difference is only in words, not in reality.

ARE we, under the gospel, wholly dependent on God for every good qualification ? So was Adam before the fall. Was real goodness, holiness, or virtue required of him as a previous condition of eternal life ? The same things, in kind, are required of us on the *limitarian plan* in the same view, only not in so high a degree : For an *holy heart* is at the bottom of all the conditional accomplishments they plead for, as making out our claim, in the sight of God, to his eternal favor. Did God say to Adam you shall produce or shew your qualifications in heart and life, or else there is no foundation of hope from the constitution you are under ? Just so the *limitarian* preacher says to us under the gospel. So in all other respects, the old and new constitutions are, *in their nature, substantially* the same.

But, there is one difference to be taken

notice of, which makes the new covenant much more difficult to obtain eternal life by, than the old. It is this ; the terms and conditions God required of Adam were such, as, at the time they were made, Adam had both natural and moral power to comply with : Whereas we now have only the natural power, but no moral power within our souls. Though moral impotency is very far from excusing us from guilt ; yet, nevertheless, this shews us that they who now hear the gospel, are, on *limitarian* principles, in a far more perilous condition than man was, when placed under the first covenant ; or that Jesus Christ preached in all his infinite fullness, is not so good a foundation to rely upon, as the covenant of works was. And is this the account God hath given us of the foundation he hath laid in Zion ? You may answer and say, Christ hath undertaken and engaged for sinners, to work all things in and for them. This is indeed a GLORIOUS TRUTH. Yet upon the *limitarian scheme*, are not the great multitude of mankind left out of this engagement, and under an eternal decree of reprobation too ? And not every one of them commanded to believe and repent and become a new creature, and that upon pain of damnation most dreadfully aggravated ? And is this good news to all people ? Is this gospel, or good news to every creature under heaven ? Is not this ground of hope to a lost world, much more perilous, than to man under the first covenant, which yet saved him, not from total ruin ?

I MUST freely confess, that, after a very long and very critical consideration of this matter, I cannot see but that, if any obtain eternal life on the *limitarian plan*, they do it essentially in the same way, in which Adam was to make it sure by the first covenant, i. e. by their own qualifications. These are no more of free grace than his ~~must~~ have been. Nor can I see, but that the foundation of hope laid in Christ for man, since the fall, is far more perilous than his ground of hope by the first covenant : But, blessed be God, Jesus Christ is preached in the TRUE GOSPEL, as a sure foundation and fountain of life to *every* guilty sinner, and to all alike ; and every sinner is alike commanded to believe on him. “ This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation (the acceptation of all sinners without a single exception) that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners ; of whom I am chief.” 1. Tim. i. 15. And, I never yet could pray or preach according to the gospel, to satisfy my own conscience, without saying those things which, by *unavoidable consequence*, do plainly infer, that God will have all men to be saved in the end ; and that Christ is the Savior of all men, in the *full, direct and most natural meaning of the words* ; though he is especially so to those who now believe, as I have before noticed. Nor, did I ever yet hear an evangelical sermon from any man, or a devout prayer, without premises from which the same consequence is inevitable.

I AM very sensible that it has been com-

mon for great and good preachers to mix much of the old and new covenant together ; though they never yet could make them unite in one. So far as the new covenant has been attended to with clearness, as *pure gospel*, they have always said those things which cannot possibly be true ; unless, Christ hath given his life a ransom for all ; and died for the sins of the whole world ; and will have all men to be saved ; and will draw all men unto him, in the *plain, simple sense* of language, without any comment at all. Every sentence and exhibition of pure gospel, from the first to the last page in the book of God, does fully announce or imply the same ; though the desert of man, on the covenant of works, is all along kept in our view, with all the dreadful thunders of a broken law, and the tremendous wrath of Deity against sin every where displayed as a flaming fire. The gospel and the law over against each other, even as in their ancient types, mount *Gerizim* and mount *Ebal*.

It is my very humble, though very firm conclusion, after all possible attention to the nature of things, and to the word of God, that whatsoever miserable sinner of the human kind is disposed to collect the least ray of hope from any distinctions, or qualifications in his heart, or in his life, however he may come by them, to embolden him to depend on eternal life, as promised in *consequence* of these things ; but not *insured* in the Mediator previous to all, or any of these qualifications, and that most absolutely in the

covenant of redemption ; that man, I say, does still virtually desire to be under the law. And he shall hear the law too, until the spirit of God shall be pleased to furnish him with a more honorable sense of the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent ; and more exalted views of the glory of JEHOVAH, in the manifestations of infinite, eternal, self-moved love, and in his displays of sovereign mercy to a lost world.

I WOULD now resume and illustrate a thought which I have before introduced. It is a common thing among men, that a man is condemned in one character, and justified in another, even the same man. A judge may be likewise general of an army. He may appear exceeding well in one of these characters, and very bad in the other. He may be justly damned or condemned as a general, having ruined his country in his military character ; and yet be much approved or justified as a civilian. He may be justly amerced to the amount of ten times the value of his estate, and cast into prison for life ; yet be wholly justified in the latter character. A sponsor may step in and redeem him, and he may after that enjoy the blessings of his good character ; although his bad one will remain forever condemned, and not the less so because he is redeemed from the penalty of it.

No fair, candid reader will cavil at this simile, because it does not *quadrate* in all respects : Since it does intirely in the point designed to be illustrated by it, which is, that

we may be forever condemned in one character ; yet justified in another, and also may be delivered from all the pains and penalties justly due to our condemned character and conduct. To say that both characters in this similitude are personal ; whereas, in the way of our salvation, *one* is only imputative, is nothing at all to the purpose. For the imputed character is, in the account of our great Judge, and by the covenant of redemption, just the same as to our redemption from the pains of hell, and our title to heaven, as if it were personal.

THE common sense and practice of mankind, in many cases in common life, approves of the condemnation and justification of the same persons, in different relations and connections ; and of the indemnity of men most justly condemned, in a real character, which they have personally sustained. And though men cannot be happy and miserable at the same time ; yet they may be happy, in their persons and real enjoyments, while forever conscious they have merited nothing but sorrow and woe.

IT is further an evidence of true gospel-faith and hope ; that they work by love, and purify the heart and life. Faith operates in a way of love to God and man ; “ and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as HE is pure.”

I HAVE already observed, that the faith and hope for which I am pleading, always have such an effect, and, in the very nature

of things, always will, while men and moral agents remain what God has made them. Also my own experience does indeed witness to this truth. I suppose that my own soul is formed on the general, the universal plan of human nature: And I am certain that such a view of God and the way of salvation as I am pleading for; such a view of man, and of all creatures, and of their entire, absolute, and everlasting dependence on God; such a sense of the guilt and misery of man by nature, and the exalted glory of Christ, and of infinite, free, and sovereign grace, has, of all things, the most powerful effect on my own heart to lead to repentance, odium of all sin, the mortification of every inordinate desire, and every worldly lust, joyful resignation to the will of God in all things, in all afflictions, however painful to nature, and to make me feel towards God and all his creatures, in imitation of the feelings of the blessed Redeemer. I am certain that if I have, in any degree, the same mind which was also in Christ Jesus, I have it in this way. When I have the deepest sense of these things, the world and creatures appear to me as nothing, yea, less than nothing and vanity, and God all in all. Therefore, if other human souls are like mine, I have not the least fear that understanding the way of salvation as I do, will do any harm to any child of Adam; but quite the reverse.

I do not contract my views of the great salvation, the *common salvation*, within nar-

rower limits, without limiting the Holy One of Israel, even as to the capital glory of all his ways. Yet after all, I am happy in this, that if my dear kindred of the human kind, or many of them cannot, at present, extend their faith beyond the *narrow* bounds of the *limitarian plan* ; yet they are still in the sure way to eternal salvation, if they fall not short of their own understanding of the way of life ; that is to say, if they have that repentance, *faith*, and holiness which they hold necessary ; which is exactly the same as that which I maintain necessary, and in a way of free grace only. I well know that every man is *at present*, in the way that leadeth to destruction, who hath not these graces. If many suppose, that the great Mediator hath never engaged, in his own way and time, to give these graces, except to a few of the human kind ; let them see to it that they be found among those few. If they do this, they shall never fail.

THEIR faith falls short in **no** essential point : Their unhappiness lies only in this, that they do not draw all the blessed consequences and comforts they might draw, from premises truly evangelical and saving. The premises are not unsafe, as far as they go. If inwrought into the soul, they shall lead to safety. We ought, however, to satisfy ourselves in the inquiry, **WHAT IS TRUTH ?** Yet it is not our believing, or not believing, that there

are many or few who shall arrive at glory, which will save or ruin any of us. Believing the great, essential doctrines of grace, and living agreeably to the power of them; believing on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of our souls, and following him in the regeneration, whether that work be done for us sooner or later, these, as God's means, will end in glory. No man shall see the Lord in glory, without *holiness*, and that in a far more perfect degree than ever any man had in this world since the fall, or ever will have while breath remains, or the soul is in union with this mortal body. Most blessed however, are those elect of God, chosen in Christ to early conversion, piety, and holiness, and to a life of faith, godliness, and divine pleasure all their days.

LET those who believe, that, in the most *plain* and *literal sense*, Christ is God's salvation to the ends of the earth: That as sin hath reigned unto death, *much more*, shall grace reign through righteousness to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord: And that as, by one man, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation; so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life: I say, let all such see to it, without delay, that they become new creatures. Such should be immediately reconciled to that God, in the actual temper of their souls, who is *truly reconciled* to them, in the covenant of redemption, and the atonement

of his dear Son; and they should walk worthy of him, who hath called them to his kingdom and glory. For, in very deed, there is the same necessity of all this, in order that we may be happy in the world to come, on the doctrine here advanced, as on any limited plan of salvation, that ever entered into the minds of any of the lost human race.

THE great business of the preachers of righteousness is little concerned, in telling, *how many shall be saved*; but rather, how guilty, miserable souls shall be saved. They are to hold up to the view of all men, the true character of JEHOVAH, and of fallen man: And the relation in which man stands to his Maker and his Judge, his Redeemer, and the Sanctifier of the polluted human soul: What Christ hath done to lay the sole foundation of all his hopes: What must be done on his soul to bring him to the fruition of that blessedness which alone can happy his immortal soul: What man must be and do, as indispensably necessary, in its due place, to give him true comfort in this world, and introduce him to the inheritance and enjoyment of a kingdom prepared for the elect body of Christ, and, with God, made absolutely sure to that whole body, before the world began: And to point out and enforce all relative duties, and every moral virtue, agreeably to the reason and nature of things, and the word of God.

THEY are also to shew the horrible nature of all sin, vice, and immorality ; that it is even death, hell, and damnation, so long as the soul continues impenitent in the ways of it. They are to dissuade from it, by every gospel motive, and by every motive from God's pure, holy, and infinitely amiable law. They are to give hope and relief to the sinking, despairing soul, *in Christ alone*, and comfort to the children of God *in him only* : To lead in the holy and joyful solemnities of divine worship, in the high praises of God and the Lamb : To preach the *unsearchable riches of Christ* : And to manifest their solemn sense of all these things, by a pure and holy life and example. Yet when pressed with arguments against that glorious, divine revelation God hath made to a lost world, which never can be fully and fairly answered on any more limited plan, I think it a duty, and highly expedient to take refuge in that *very gospel* which, for ages and generations, has lain in great part, hidden from men, in all the extent and glory of it. In which all the infinite honors of Deity are secured, and also the final recovery of a lost world. Thus, they are to open the word of God as fully as possible in that true sense, against which there can lie no solid charge of inconsistency. Thus it will forever appear in the utmost divine beauty, and in glorious harmony, from beginning to end.

COULD I possibly conceive of any way,

in which the great and holy God might be more glorified in the eternal *personal* damnation of many, or most of mankind, than in extending final redemption to them all; I certainly ought to acquiesce in such a fearful event, yea, even to wish for it. But as it really appears to me, from the nature of God, from his word, and from all his works, and above all, from the character, atonement and commission of his dear Son, and from the covenant of redemption and of grace, that the most high and holy God cannot leave one human soul forever, under the power of spiritual and eternal death, consistent with his own highest declarative honor, and glory; I ought not, I cannot believe he ever will.

My reason is weak, very weak indeed; yet it is my duty to keep close to the dictates of it, under the all-sacred authority of divine revelation. I cannot possibly see, but that, in the eternal, personal damnation of one human soul, the Most High would cast a great reflection on the full and complete atonement of the Son of his love, and also on the Father himself, as the Son is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. The dishonorable reflection appears to me would consist in this; it would fully imply and indicate, either, that the atonement of Christ was not infinite, nor his power and faithfulness; or that the love, pity, mercy, and grace of

God, was not infinite ; or that the satisfaction of Christ could not be adequate to the divine law.

To imagine there is any need of the *eternal personal torment* of any sinner of the human race, in order further to illustrate the holiness and justice of God, the infinite evil of sin ; or further to impress the minds of the intelligent system with a sense of the infinite odiousness of sin, and the infinite purity of God, and his infinite hatred of all sin, is plainly to suppose that the great work of the Son of God can admit of some amendment ; that in very deed it is not a finished work. For any man to think this necessary or expedient, or any such thing, is an amazing reflection on him who said " IT IS FINISHED," when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. It is infinitely more absurd than it would be for a nobleman, whose galleries are adorned with the inimitable performances of a *Raphael* or a *Titian*, afterwards to employ the most contemptible of all painters, to come and retouch them, in order to their greater embellishment ! *God is a rock, his work is perfect.* The work of redemption is most emphatically so. Of all that pertains to this work, must it be said, " Whatsoever God doth, it shall be forever : Nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it ; and God doth it that man should fear before him."

IN good truth, I can learn nothing from

the nature, character, word, or works of God; nothing from the emanations he has been pleased to make of himself, that leads me to a single idea that the most holy God, since what hath been done and suffered by the Son of his love, can derive any glory to himself, or communicate any instruction, any good to the intelligent system, from the eternal, personal damnation of any poor, miserable, guilty sinner of the human kind; or that such a thing can be without manifest opposition to the blessed nature of God, who is infinite love, and to the glorious and merciful covenant of redemption, and all the most glorious and tremendous work of the Son of God, which he finished on the cross. I cannot see, but that the nature of God is now open, (if I may so speak) the nature of eternal, infinite, unlimited, boundless love, is now free to take its spontaneous course, without the least obstacle, from any opposing claims of justice, standing in the way of the final salvation of a whole guilty world. If it be so, do we in any wise, displease God in ascribing such "salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb? Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen." Rev. vii.

I AM constrained to think, that it is this very plan of redeeming wisdom, power, and love, that the four and twenty elders, the representatives of all the redeemed on high,

hold in rapturous contemplation; and also all the blessed in heaven, when they fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." *Thy pleasure*, most emphatically, as all things were made for, and result in the glories of redeeming love. Rev. iv. Nor can I, on any *limitarian plan*, or on any in the universe, but that I am pleading for, account for that glorious display. Rev. v. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures,* and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying, with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and

* *Zōon.*

twenty elders fell down, and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever”

If we attend only to the voice of the holy law of God, as it sounds every where through the bible, we must forever despair, not only of the salvation of this lost *world*, but of any *one* of the fallen race; unless we consider this law, in all its maledictions, and in all its holy demands, *wholly* satisfied in the second man, the Lord from heaven. This indeed, is pure gospel truth. When we so consider it, the door of salvation is wide open for all, and open alike for every child of Adam. The whole debt is paid, and why should not all the prisoners be discharged? Christ paid it not for himself, but for them, and that according to divine stipulation, and the entire good pleasure of the Father. “*Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.*”

HE has as much power and love, as he has of merit; and his *kingly* and *prophetic* abilities are equal to his *priestly*. All power is given to him, in heaven and in earth. Shall the infinite love, that brought him to the cross to die for the sins of the whole world, stop at the cross? Will he not make the application, finally, as extensive as the merits of the purchase? If not, it cannot be for want of power, it must be only for want of will and merciful disposition of soul. Is it any honor

to Christ, that we restrain the bowels of his love in our own minds? Or is it agreeable to his word? Ye are not straitened in him; but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Certainly we should more honor and please God, and the Son of his love, if we had not such narrow, limited thoughts of DIVINE LOVE.

You, my reader, know, in your own soul, that you sincerely and cordially love your neighbor, and daily give him every possible proof of it; yet he so hates you, that he cannot, he will not believe that you love him, and is ever complaining of you as the most bitter, cruel enemy he has in the world. Does he not abuse and dishonor you? But what proof did you ever give to any man on earth, that you loved him and wished well to him, in any measure comparable to the testimonies of love, mercy, pity, and real good will which the Redeemer does daily produce, to prove his real, wonderful love, mercy, and pity toward every child of Adam? He bestows more real kindness on the vilest sinner in the world, in one day, than ever you bestowed on any person on earth, in your whole life.

AFTER all this, for us to say, that it is his will and disposition to damn most of mankind in person, to all eternity, appears to me not honorable to the true character of Christ, or agreeable to his word. To say, he is willing to save every sinner, that he taketh no pleasure in the death of him

that dieth, but that he would turn and live; and yet that God Almighty will not see that effected in his own way and time, in which he so much delights, and *that*, after every obstacle is removed by his Son, which ever stood in the way of man's salvation, I think, is very far from doing honor to the character of the living and true God. Our heavenly Father would have us argue his love, and that of his Son towards unworthy sinners, from all the manifestations of love, kindness and mercy he hath made to them, in all the paths of his providence, and, above 'all, in the wonders of redeeming love. It is our great blame that we do not know that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance, and that repentance takes hold of a sense of pardon and eternal life.

For my own part. I feel afraid to speak, or even think of my heavenly Father, in the *limitarian* view of him; lest I should awfully abuse that character which claims my highest reverence and love. If my own children will think and say, that, *for my own pleasure*, I will make them as miserable as I can, after all the fruits of kindness in my power, which I have conferred upon them with an unremitting hand; I should think them very wicked, a shame to their father, and bitterness to her that bare them. Why should we imagine, that our heavenly Father is pleased to have us entertain similar thoughts of him? "If ye then being evil, know how to give good

gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?" Matt. vii. 11.

THE work of Christ is a *finished work*. The covenant of redemption is fulfilled on his part, *in every iota of it*.

THE blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all sin*, from *impenitence, hardness of heart, and blindness of mind*, as well as practical sins. Indeed, if it did not, it could cleanse from no sin at all: For *these* are the fountain of all other sins and the greatest of all. All sins are alike forgiven to men, and done away in the atonement; and regeneration, repentance and faith, are communicated on the same ground, and their office is to make us "*know the things freely given us of God.*" God sent his beloved Son into the world, that the world, through him might be saved; and he "*tasted death for every man.*" The prophet foresaw this, and he speaks of the blessed consequence, without a word or thought of limitation. He considers a lost world all alike prisoners of justice, and cast into one and the same doleful pit together; yet proclaims aloud, "By the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water" Zech. ix. 11. Nor had Isaiah any thought of limitation, when he speaks of the anointing of the Son of God, "*to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to comfort ALL that mourn.*"

Ifai. lxi. "That thou mayest say to the prisoners, go forth; and to them that are in darkness, shew yourselves." Ifai. xlix. 9. And it is worthy of our notice, that when the Savior was commenting on these passages, he immediately took occasion to open the extent of his salvation to the audience. Luke iv. This was as much to their surprize and offence, as the most extensive doctrine of the salvation of sinners now is to the most tenacious retainer of the doctrine of a *partial salvation*.

As I have already hinted, whatever doctrinal persuasion may be in the mind of any unregenerate man, that the way of salvation, and the extent of it, according to the nature and word of God, is such as I maintain, this doctrine will never quiet an alarming, polluted conscience, and set the soul at rest from awful fears and terrors; until it is acquainted with God and *reconciled* to him.

WHILE total enmity to God remains in the soul, there will be distressing fears in seasons of reflection. Nor is it possible in the nature of things, that creatures that hate God as we do, in our natural state, should have that exalted sense of his love, which is manifested in the gospel, and is indeed the glory of it. Blind, unrenewed sinners will measure the love of God, and the motives on which they suppose God acts, much by their own.

WE must indeed know the living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, in order to have a feeling apprehension of

our eternal life, as manifest in the gospel; whether we have a more confined, or a more extensive understanding of it. *Never can we have comfort in the reconciliation of a friend, to us; until our hearts meet with him in that reconciliation.* If our enmity remains, it will exclude us from comfort in his friendship. How important then is an immediate reconciliation to God, by a new creation in Christ Jesus, and by repentance and faith in his blood!

THE infinite importance of immediate reconciliation to God, is even more forcibly urged on the doctrine I have advanced, than on any more limited principles. The great apostle Paul hath in a few words, virtually said all I have been pleading for; and from premises arising from the most extensive view of the atonement of Christ, he does most forcibly inculcate the immediate reconciliation of sinners to God. "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if *one* died for *all*, then were all dead; and that he died for *all*, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling *the world* unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed

unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2. Cor. v.

ALTHOUGH this apostle did also preach the law abundantly, and found the voice of pure justice in all its tremendous terrors; yet he never preached or wrote one word inconsistent with what I have just quoted. Whenever in his preaching or writing, he held up the gospel to view, it was of the same tenor. The same may be said of all the other apostles, and of all the prophets. They learned it from Jesus Christ himself, in whom the only foundation was laid, and who announced the same glorious tidings.

AND, truly, as I have before hinted, I never read or heard any discourses of eminent and pious protestant divines, but what were built on premises and arguments which fully infer that glorious, final extent of salvation, which I maintain, however inconsistent they may have been, in some parts of their writings or sermons. Indeed, all I have now written, is nothing more or less than the common, genuine, protestant doctrine of grace, set free from all the contradictions and inconsistencies that have so long been intermixed with it, and the genuine and glorious conse-

quences of it more openly and explicitly displayed. And thus I read those writings still, and ever shall, with great edification and pleasure. And the inconsistencies I find intermixed with such pure and glorious truths, give me no more offence, than the bones I find in delicious fish or fowl at my table.

To close the whole, as a consistent IMPROVEMENT of this doctrine of salvation.

HOW should we love, fear, adore, and obey such a God, whose nature and character is such as here exhibited to our view! How ought we to submit to him in all things, and rejoice in him evermore! What a foundation is here laid for the relief of the most guilty, even the chief of sinners! What high and honorable thoughts of God should we ever entertain, and what should we think of Christ his Son! What comfort and even joy does this doctrine afford us in all scenes of divine providence, in the whole government of such a God!

HENCE how are we taught to love one another, to love, pity and pray for all our fellow sinners! How will the firm belief of this doctrine lead us to prize the word and ordinances of God, and to delight in his worship, and to call on all creatures to praise the Lord, whose mercy endureth forever, and to hate all sin, all that is opposite to the nature and com-

mands of such a God! How will these principles, if really in the heart, produce a feeling sense that all sin, vice and immorality, is no other than death, hell, and damnation; and that holiness and virtue is heaven and divine glory! How will they lead us to live religion, for the love and pleasure of it; and to mourn for, and shun all disobedience to God, all moral evil as hateful beyond all expression, in its own nature, and as that which cost our best Friend, our blessed Redeemer so dear! How will these truths, if really believed and wrought into the soul, promote love, union, and harmony among all the ministers of Christ, and every branch of his church redeemed by his own blood, of *whatever denomination they are!*

THESE principles cannot make those who do not believe them, either worse or better: For they can have no effect upon them. And as for all those who do really *in their hearts* believe in this salvation, I am certain the effect will be very great and good. Their hearts will be enlarged, and they will run in the way of God's commandments. Our misery consists very much in the want of high and honorable thoughts of God and of Christ. And we fall short in nothing more than in our ideas of the divine love. There is not a miserable sinner on earth, and never was, who would not trust in God, if he had a knowledge of his true character. "They

that know thy name will put their trust in thee." Pſal. ix. 10. But all that know not God, are in a ſtate of condemnation. There never can be any danger of our having too exalted and enlarged thoughts of any of the attributes of God, no not of his love: For GOD IS LOVE. And to keep ourſelves in the love of God, in all the infinite extent of it, can never bring us into condemnation.

You, my dear reader, as well as the writer, muſt ſoon die, and appear at the awful bar of an omnifcient and holy Judge. We muſt ſoon make trial of the foundation of the hope upon which we build. Our diſtinctions from other loſt finners, will probably be no greater then, than at this very moment; and where ſhall we look for ſupport then? To things within ourſelves, or to Jeſus Chriſt? To our good qualifications, or to God alone? *Will you, my friend, venture into the eternal world with any hope, or any mixture of hope, but what is built on JEHOVAH alone, as manifeſt in his beloved Son?*

WHATEVER men may plead, in days of health, in favor of marks and diſtinctions *in themſelves*, to feed their vanity, or ſupport their hope; I never yet diſcourſed with any dying man in the exerciſe of his rational powers, who did not entirely ſet at nought every ſuch ground of hope. I have invariably found every one who felt within his ſoul in that awful, trying hour,

any hope at all, has fixed it wholly on the glorious nature and attributes of God, as displayed in the great Redeemer. And whatever our *refuge* may be now, you and I, my dear friend, must make *this* our last refuge. Death is too terrible, and the tribunal of the great Judge too awful, to admit of any confidence but in Christ alone.

WE shall not feel ourselves so much better than others, when death and the judgment stare us in the face, as we are apt to do, in days of worldly prosperity and pleasure. Whatever we imagine now, we shall then be fully convinced that a sole, unmixed dependence on God in Christ can alone support our trembling souls; and that every other refuge is but a refuge of lies. We shall then find our need of Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and compleat redemption in every view, and in every part of it, for Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last. God, in his Son, will be all in all. And in that trying hour, we shall all find, that it is our sole refuge and only consolation, that, OF HIM, AND THROUGH HIM, AND TO HIM ARE ALL THINGS, TO WHOM BE GLORY FOREVER.

A M E N.



